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Sight and Sound

20
PAGES OF
FILM
REVIEWS

Saeed Jaffrey
remembers Satyajit Ray
'Orlando' in Russia
The rise and rise of
the Carry Ons
'Hard-Boiled' in Hong Kong

Surreal cities

The neon world of
Jim Jarmusch's
'Night on Earth'
Dreamscapes from
'Metropolis' to Batman
Virtual reality:
the inventing of Berlin

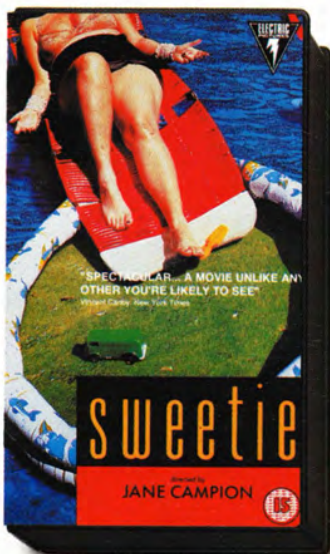


Winona Ryder in 'Night on Earth'



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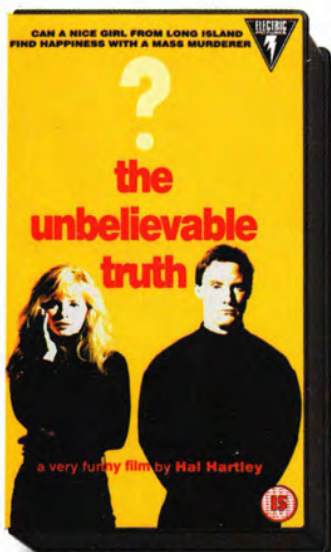
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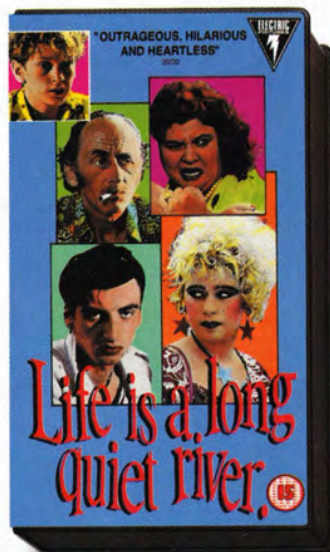
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Androgyny in Russia, 'Orlando': 12



Dressed to laugh, the 'Carry Ons': 16



City dreams, 'Batman Returns': 24

Features

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

With the release of Jim Jarmusch's new film *Night on Earth*, J. Hoberman asks what makes him a New York film-maker
Plus Peter Keogh interviews the director
Plus B. Ruby Rich on US independent film-making from the 60s to the 90s **6**

FIRE AND ICE

In a cold St Petersburg spring, Sally Potter, Tilda Swinton and Quentin Crisp film *Orlando*.
Verina Glaessner reports **12**

CARRY ON CAMP

Freewheeling anarchy and disrespectful desire are at the core of that most patronised feature of British cinema, the *Carry On* films, argues Andy Medhurst **16**

HARD BOILED

In Hong Kong, schedules are short, John Woo goes his own way, the prospect of 1997 looms and the film festival thrives, reports Tony Rayns **20**

DELIRIOUS PROJECTIONS

From *King Kong* to *Batman Returns* and from *Metropolis* to *Blade Runner*, Peter Wollen traces a cinematic history of the city that owes more to Expressionism and cartoons than to realism **24**

SATYAJIT RAY

As a tribute to the great director, Saeed Jaffrey and Sir Richard Attenborough write about working with Ray, and Ashish Rajadhyaksha reflects on the film-maker and Indian history **28**

Regulars

EDITORIAL A single possibility **3**

TELEVISION James Saynor on a forthcoming Channel 4 season **4**

FESTIVALS Karen Alexander in Martinique; John Gillett in Istanbul **5**

REWIND Jenny Diski watches Frank Capra on video **39**

OBSESSION Philip Donnellan on voices and the EMI Midget **40**

BOOKS Film classics; cross-dressing; Robert Altman; fans; women and the new German cinema; women and horror **42**

LETTERS John Boorman; independent cinema; James Cameron's *Aliens* **71**

IF... Virtual Berlin **72**

Reviews

*Alien*³ **46**

Batman Returns **48**

Big Girls Don't Cry...They Get Even see Stepkids **63**

Butcher's Wife, The **49**

Dakota Road **50**

Daydream Believer **51**

Far and Away **52**

FernGully: The Last Rainforest **53**

Fontan/The Fountain **54**

Fountain, The/Fontan **54**

Freddie as F.R.O.7. **55**

Homework/La Tarea **64**

Honor Bound **56**

Lethal Weapon 3 **57**

Masala **58**

Night on Earth **59**

Noises Off **60**

Off and Running **60**

Pepi, Luci, Bom.../Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón **61**

Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón/Pepi, Luci, Bom... **61**

Sleepwalkers **62**

Stepkids **63**

Tarea, La/Homework **64**

Waiting **64**

TELEVISION FILM

An Ungentlemanly Act **65**

Video reviews

Mark Kermode and William Green on this month's video releases **66**

**Next issue on
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Satyajit Ray: 28

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A single possibility

Contributors to this issue

Karen Alexander is a critic and film-maker
Jenny Diski's most recent novel is *Happily Ever After*
Lorraine Gamman's *Female Fetishism* will be published early next year
John Gillett has written on innumerable aspects of cinema
Verina Glaessner will be reporting from Russia in a future issue
J. Hoberman has recently published *Vulgar Modernism*, a collection of his criticism
Peter Keogh is film critic of *The Boston Phoenix*
Andy Medhurst teaches film at the University of Sussex
Suzanne Moore's essays are collected in *Looking for Trouble*
Kim Newman is a novelist and critic whose books include one on the horror film
Ashish Rajadhyaksha is based in Bombay and is co-producing an encyclopaedia of Indian cinema
Tony Rayns' report on Hong Kong for BBC radio was awarded the Arts Journalism prize in the BP Broadcasting Awards of 1991
B. Ruby Rich is a San Francisco-based cultural critic
James Saynor was formerly deputy editor of *The Listener*
David Thompson is the co-editor of *Scorsese on Scorsese*
Linda Ruth Williams is writing a book on D. H. Lawrence, femininity and cinema
Peter Wollen, a film-maker and critic, teaches cinema at UCLA. *Raiding the Icebox*, a collection of his essays on twentieth-century culture, is forthcoming from Verso

Would it matter if television reduced its commitment to the single play and film? It's a pressing question since there are signs that both Channel 4 and BBC are moving their support even further away from the single film in the direction of serials and series. Not only are these more popular with both viewers and advertisers, but they also cost less to produce and market.

Those interested in portents need look no further than the situation at Channel 4, which will have to raise its own advertising in 1993 and thus is on the look-out for savings and higher ratings. Rumours abound that money will be ploughed into popular series and serials and taken from the departments supporting 'one-off' fictions, whether *Film on Four* or low-budget work. Despite the fact that a swathe of liberal opinion believes that the single play or film is the litmus test of television's integrity and of its willingness to resist the blandishments of the market, there is no necessary reason why we should assume that single means good, serial bad. Both Channel 4's *GBH* and Granada's *Prime Suspect* released some of the potential of the serial and an indifferent run of *Screen One* (there were exceptions) showed how dull and unambitious the single, carefully crafted film could be. So if the single film is to be defended, a better argument needs to be advanced than its inborn superiority to its serial siblings.

One obvious defence springs to mind, and we have made it before. Without injection of cash from drama departments at the BBC and Channel 4, such various British films as *Edward II*, *Young Soul Rebels* and *The Reflecting Skin* would not have been made. It is equally

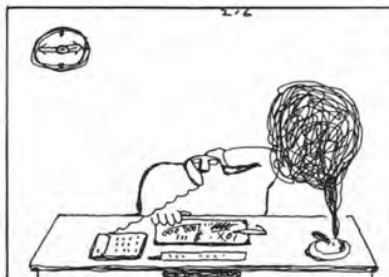
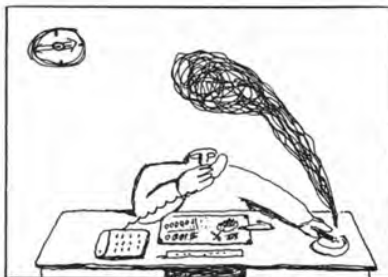
true that the injection of small amounts of cash into 'third world' films by Channel 4's Independent Film and Video Department has made a real difference to the viability of several projects.

But it is not only its financial contribution that makes television central to film in Britain. Television offers young film-makers opportunities to make modest features that at their best are trying to create something new out of the complex and heterogeneous cultural resources available in post-colonial Britain and Europe. These kinds of films are infinitely more interesting than a prize-winning film such as *The Best Intentions*, which is nothing more than a pale imitation of a past European glory (Bergman with water).

The forthcoming season of films on Channel 4, reviewed in this issue by James Saynor, is telling in this context. Wonderfully eclectic (as well as wildly uneven), it includes Jarman's *The Garden*, Black Audio's *Who Needs a Heart*, a film about Michael X, David Hayman's *Silent Scream*, an art-house prison movie, and *We the Ragamuffin*, a ragga musical set in Peckham. One film might move between film and video, another use a jazz soundtrack as experimental narrative, a third have the narrative drive of the Western. It isn't as if any of these films is great; it is that with the best of them we can, even if only at moments, glimpse a world beyond the crippling binary oppositions of video and film, popular and elite, cinema and television, Europe and other. This seems reason enough to require television not to ditch its commitment to the single film.

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon - James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, tell him my final, final offer is 8 million plus 4% of gross. When that fails, offer him story credit and director approval. When that fails ask him to direct it. By now it will be evening and time to pull-out, instead offer him 9 million and 5% of gross...'

Resolute beginners

James Saynor

'Independent' is a word with several meanings within British television. There's Independent Television (i.e. independent of the state – an inference about the BBC's dependency on the state that has rankled with corporation folk from 1955 to this day). There are independent producers – originally, a reference to Channel 4 programme-makers who didn't work for ITV companies, but now an increasingly opaque, Kafka-esque concept, mainly of interest to those who labour in contracts departments and tax offices. And then there's 'independent film and video' – a term barely recognised within the critical-industrial complex of mainstream television, but perhaps dimly perceived as something to do with art-school graduates and people on housing estates making rebarbative home movies.

In reality, in the ten years that such work has been precariously nurtured by Channel 4, the independent film and video tradition (which we'll call the 'new fiction' tradition) has represented a vibrant challenge to the semi-comatose ways of film-making within established broadcasting. 'Independent', in this context, is unusual in referring both to an industrial practice and to a cultural outlook, one that can threaten conventional television on just about every aesthetic front. No wonder this movement has been so subtly yet consistently marginalised by the status quo.

This summer, Channel 4 (beginning 20 July) has pulled together an Independent Fiction Season of some of the liveliest recent work in this field. This may represent some kind of coming-of-age, and should make it easier to judge whether the banner-waving statements associated with the genre have any validity.

It's certainly clear that new-fiction production methods differ radically from those of traditional television. Film-makers are scattered across the country, unusually close to the sources of their films, and with facilities distinct from the support-and-control systems of the 'industry'. Authorship is frequently located within a collective, and films may be improvised out of contacts rooted deep within a particular locale. So the dramas aren't researched in a hit-and-run fashion by writers, producers, actors and directors operating out of a metropolitan citadel and shot on locations visited only for the purposes of shooting.

These factors give the new fiction a spontaneity, verisimilitude and sincerity that can scarcely be denied. Further, much of it contains formal gymnastics largely unattempted within the mainstream. 'Classic realism' may be casually mixed with a range of alternative strategies, from avant-gardism to the entropic hypernaturalism of Ken Loach. Writing and performances can be of a high order, but generally don't draw attention to themselves in literary or theatrical ways.

Stories repeatedly focus on female solidarity within a bovine patriarchy. There's often a powerfully empathetic, Hoggartian understanding of working-class attitudes –



Convict and visionary: Iain Glen as Larry Winters in 'Silent Scream'

of the canny cultural balance between fecklessness and spiritedness that holds people together. Dream-fantasies and moments of transcendental epiphany abound: extra-European styles of 'magical realism' seem a particular influence.

Of the individual films in the Independent Fiction Season, the least successful is Adam Kossoff's *Turbulence*, perhaps because it's an attempt at auteurism that doesn't draw energy from any grassroots source. This vagabond movie about a middle-class girl fleeing the sexual attentions of her father manages to be both elliptical and laboured in the worst traditions of the over-intellectualised British art film. Also in a category of its own, though not for negative reasons, is *The Garden*, Derek Jarman's passion play of random-access imagery, negotiating in a totally abstract way the boundaries between tenderness and decadence, waste and fecundity, the sacramental and the sacrilegious.

Silent Scream is a relatively glossy, off-mainstream piece, powered by a remarkable 'star' performance from the sinewy Iain Glen. Bill Beech and David Hayman's film inventively recreates the life and fantasies of Larry Winters, a convict and visionary who died of a drug overdose in Barlinnie Prison in 1977, after thirteen turbulent years in the can. "When you're 'psychotic'", Winters observes, "you tend to lose your sense of objectivity". Winters' questionable madness provides a great opportunity to explore the twilight zones between objectivity, subjectivity and 'psychosis' within a turbo-charged consciousness – and hence within cinema, which may itself be another word for a heightened state of mind.

Other films spring directly from the localised, communal work methods at the heart of the new fiction. Amber Films' excellent *Dream On* presents a barrage of additions and compulsions afflicting three women from North Shields and their estranged kin – alcoholism, debt, sexual dysfunction, wife-battering, eating disorders and destructive mother-love. But all of this is packaged alongside wry, Bleasdalean survival humour, a *Wings of Desire* guardian angel dressed like George Melly, and matter-

of-fact dream scenes that are given equal status as realism to scenes of the everyday.

The blurred division between the oneiric and the here-and-now is even more of a feature of Kwesi Owusu and Kwate Nee-Owoo's *Ama*, in which a young girl from Highbury picks up atavistic vibes from her Ghanaian forebears. The tarmac-scape of London is shot in a honeyed light and a wide-angle optic that themselves seem to refer to the African plain, aided by a fauna-rich sound design. In this film, the blending of the earthy and the tranced-out into 'magical realism' is at its most adroit, while some of the image-making is as slick as MTV.

The season includes a re-run of *Hush-a-Bye Baby*, a cautionary tale of teenage Irish pregnancy with its own share of narrative quirks, and three fine shorter efforts, including *Little Richard Wrecked My Marriage*, a brassy, verismo-video comedy about Tyne-side rock-and-rollers. Its expressiveness is reminiscent of the 'underclass' films of Alan Clarke, but it's saddled with a storyline that's unintentionally hard to follow.

Equally dense is the final film in the season, Black Audio Film Collective's feature-length *Who Needs a Heart*. You need programme notes to get the most out of it, but director John Akomfrah pulls off some striking formal feats. The film traces the lifestyle experiments of a clique of groovers in Britain of the 60s and 70s who take their lead from the enigmatic black-power outlaw, Michael X. Nothing within the frame departs from classic realism, but Akomfrah frequently fades out the dialogue to leave only Foley effects and a plangent audio collage, based around free jazz. The device creates some of the imaginative space of the spectator of a silent movie, our ruminations nudged along by the remarkable aural wrap. Such lateral cinema provides a fitting finale to the season.

As the *nouvelle vague* reacted against a stifling 'tradition of quality' in French cinema, the British new fiction offers a similar rebuke to the sclerotic, over-institutionalised norms of our own dominant screen products. All pioneering art tends to be produced on a shoestring, is often made by resolute beginners, and is usually 'experimental' in nature. These, however, are effectively non-values within British television, where large budgets and seasoned 'professionalism' – with people working to rigorously laid down narrative styles – are regarded as prerequisites for 'quality' work.

Public debates over the future of good television are nearly always couched in mandarin terms like 'quality' and 'distinctiveness'. But these are merely evasive, pompous, citadel-guarding expressions that have little to do with a proper critical appreciation of moving images.

If words like 'freedom' and 'inspiration' and 'sincerity' and 'energy' – words of the *nouvelle vague* – were more on the lips of our broadcasting mandarins and honchos, one would be more confident about the prospects for the new fiction, and for our television culture generally. We might also come to a new and properly dynamic understanding of the word, 'independent'.

'The British new fiction offers a rebuke to the norms of our dominant screen products. All pioneering art tends to be produced on a shoestring, and is often made by resolute beginners'

Into the centre

Karen Alexander in Martinique

As the birthplace of Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and Édouard Glissant, Martinique has long enjoyed respect as a vital source of contemporary black culture. With the international success of Euzhan Palcy, this respect has been extended to the emergent film culture of the French Caribbean, represented also by Guadeloupian Sarah Maldoror. The first of Martinique's 'Images Caraïbes' festivals six years ago marked a further, important stage in the development of an international black film culture. Coming in the wake of pioneering festivals such as Chicago's 'Black Light' and Burkina Faso's 'Fespaco', it shifted emphasis away from the US and Africa, creating in the Caribbean a third 'home base' for black film-makers and one with perhaps greater resonance for European practitioners.

This was reflected in the 1992 festival in the several entries of dual origin, including Reece Auguiste's *Mysteries of July* (Dominica/Great Britain), Felix de Rooy's *Ava and Gabriel* (Curaçao/Holland) and Raoul Peck's *Lumumba, Death of a Prophet* (Haiti/France). While it is true that the European component of these co-productions expresses the continuing hegemony of the ex-colonial powers, these films nevertheless represent a valuable contribution to the creation of a broad-based Caribbean film culture, of which 'Images Caraïbes' is the most eloquent expression.

The theme of this year's third biennial festival was a celebration of 500 years of Amerindian, Black and Popular Resistance, a response to the West's self-congratulatory commemoration of Columbus' 'discovery' of the Americas. The broad catchment area allowed an impressive range of countries to be represented, including Canada, Colombia, Cuba, France, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Porto Rico, Trinidad and Venezuela. The competitions were supplemented by several special sections that gave comparative contexts to Caribbean cinema, notably, Images of Black American Culture, Images of Women of the Americas, Images of Africa, Views of the Caribbean from the Outside, and Images of Amerindian Resistance. The festival also saw the launch of the Caribbean Film and Video Federation, set up to encourage the development of the film, video and television industries within the region and their promotion worldwide. With production, training, lobbying, information exchange, critical analysis and archival work as its principal objectives, the Federation will combine with 'Images Caraïbes' to provide a focus for black film-making that is not, as is usually the case, situated on the peripheries of the 'mainstream'.

This year's competition included a specific category for television, in an acknowledgment of the expansion of the industry in the region and of the importance of producing specifically Caribbean programmes to counter the dominance of US-originated broadcasts. This was the argument behind Christopher Laird and Tony Hall's *And the Dish Ran Away with the Spoon*

(Trinidad and Tobago), an investigation of Caribbean alternatives to satellite colonialism and winner of the Environmental Prize.

Prizes for film and video were awarded in several categories: most deservedly to Selwyn Jacobs' *Carol's Mirror* (Canada), a deceptively simple video drama about 'integrated casting' in a school play, and most bizarrely to Lol Creme's first feature, *The Lunatic*, which received a Special Mention. In the category of 'best film not to win a prize', my choice was the Mexican/Venezuelan *Latino Bar* by Paul Leduc, a sensual drama without dialogue but in every other respect a classic.

Cuban Fernando Perez's *Hello Hemingway* was a surprising winner of the Special Jury Prize for Best Feature-Length Fiction, beating Felix de Rooy's excellent *Ava and Gabriel* into second place. The presence in competition of de Rooy's film reflects one of the problems with biennial festivals: that films shown can be up to two years old, creating the impression that the festival is the last stop on a fully exploited circuit. The solution would be for 'Images Caraïbes' to become an annual event, though the financial constraints which afflict even the 'Black Cannes', as 'Images Caraïbes' has been called, make this less than likely.

John Gillett in Istanbul

These are not the best of times for Turkish cinema – only twenty or so films were made last year and nobody seems to know quite where the industry is heading. In the course of seminars held during the recent Istanbul Festival, directors and producers spoke about their main dilemma – whether to make purely commercial films for audiences now drawn mainly to television and video or to concentrate on the high-quality art films that win prizes at festivals. New legislation is on the statute books, the purpose of which is to increase production and give extra confidence to the industry.

Judging from what we saw in Istanbul, the last year has not been a good one – too many silly melodramas and pretentious allegories drawing on influences from Buñuel to Bergman. Two or three films

'The festival shifted emphasis away from the US and Africa, creating in the Caribbean a third home base for black film-makers and one with perhaps greater resonance for European practitioners'



Isil Özgentürk's 'I Love You Rosa'

stood out, with *The Consensus* by Oğuzhan Tercan leading the field. An actor is offered the part of 'the killer' in a film dealing with the assassination of a prominent journalist in the late 70s, a period of intense political terrorism. As he tries to unravel the true facts of the case, the actor imagines himself involved in the actual murder plot, often appearing in the same shot as the other killers in flashbacks depicting the crime. Interwoven with these 'reconstructions' are documentary interviews with surviving politicians, most of whom are evasive and pompous.

This prompted several Turkish journalists to condemn the film for not coming out more directly against the Right, whom they believe to be responsible for the assassination. Tercan's narrative keeps all these strands in clear focus and works up to a tense climax, backed by a throbbing score by Zülfü Livaneli. Sub-Rosi perhaps, but fascinating nevertheless.

I Love You Rosa by Isil Özgentürk (the wife of distinguished director Ali Özgentürk, who also produced the film) is the story of a woman who strives "to grasp life fully with all its pains and pleasures alike" (as the synopsis puts it). The result is more than a little fey, yet there are many well-realised scenes, especially at the beginning, with the young girl heroine who thinks she is a princess causing havoc in a convent and dreaming of her Prince Charming. The middle section is rather top-heavy in its use of music and too many mugging actors, but it picks up towards the end with the elderly Rosa, now a shop-soiled bag lady, left alone with her parrot in a strange white set, that echoes some of the earlier scenes of her youth.

Ömer Kavur is best known for *Motherland Hotel* (1987); his new film, *The Secret Face*, conveys the same ambiguous mood and seems determined to be desperately 'meaningful'. A young photographer supplies a mysterious woman with all the photographs he takes of night clubs, taverns and shops; she becomes haunted by one of a suburban watchmaker and asks the photographer to find out about his dreams and fantasies. This leads to much mooning about in streets and old ruins as the two follow each other around and the woman, dressed in black, appears and disappears like a latter-day Maria Casarès in *Orphée*. The film is handsomely shot, with excellent location work and colour (unlike many Turkish films on view), but this fails to prevent it from seeming long-winded and pretentious.



Felix de Rooy's 'Ava and Gabriel'

A love of chance encounters and an immigrant's eye-view make Jim Jarmusch a New York film-maker, argues J. Hoberman

● Jim Jarmusch may be the hottest American independent on the international film circuit, but he's scarcely a prophet without honour in his adopted hometown. On the contrary, his film *Night on Earth*, which has been holding for months at two Manhattan first-run cinemas, received rave reviews from all four of New York's dailies, not to mention the *Wall Street Journal*.

Indeed, it would not be too much to say that Jarmusch is adored in New York – as much a local hero as Woody Allen or Martin Scorsese or, more controversially, Brooklyn's Spike Lee. Each of Jarmusch's last four features has had its American premiere at the New York Film Festival (the packed press previews have been events in themselves) and, with Jonathan Demme relocated to exurbia, Jarmusch is the best-known film-maker associated with the downtown bohemia. For some, he is that bohemia.

Night on Earth, hailed in the *New York Times* as Jarmusch's "most effervescent work to date", was heralded by a *Times* profile as warm and gushing as the film-maker himself is cool and taciturn – a portrait of the artist as a one-man fount of gentrification. "Jim Jarmusch's planet is the Lower East Side, its bars, bodegas and its pavement make up his home, his office, and his hangout", the piece began, going on to describe an evening on "planet Jarmusch" that consisted mainly of a brief stroll around the director's neighbourhood (noting such landmarks as Martin Scorsese's school) and a few quick drinks at a watering-hole populated by "old Italians playing Vic Damone".

What's striking is that Jarmusch has in fact done relatively little filming on his 'planet'. Only his first (and weakest) feature, *Permanent Vacation* (1980), is set entirely in New York. *Stranger than Paradise* (1984) opens in Lower Manhattan but soon takes to the road; *Down by Law* (1986) and *Mystery Train* (1989) unfold in a mythical South. What is distinctively New York is Jarmusch's attitude – his cultivated immigrant-eye-view, highly developed taste for urban detritus, studied minimalism, beat disdain, fondness for roadside attractions and fascination with chance encounters. "Why movies? Why don't we just go outside and watch real life instead", he invited the *Times*, propounding the basic tenet of the Warholian aesthetic.

Jarmusch is always in danger of being overrated. Despite the cosmic perspective implicit in its title, *Night on Earth* is the work of a miniaturist. Less overtly stylised and more performer-oriented than previous Jarmusch efforts, this anthology of five stories, each the drama of a cabdriver and a fare, set in five cities (LA, New York, Paris, Rome, Helsinki) is less guided tour than *tour de force* – the logistical complexity of shooting in the quintet of cities is dwarfed by the ingenuity required to shoot in five different cabs. The taxi is a vehicle – literally – and each

actor in Jarmusch's splendidly eccentric cast is some sort of text. (There hasn't been a film since Godard's *King Lear* in which the performers' mere presence carried so much cross-referential baggage.)

Night on Earth opens, at twilight, in LA with one-and-a-half genuine movie stars, Winona Ryder and Gena Rowlands, as the first combination. With her backwards baseball cap and oversized shirt, Ryder is the ultimate teenager, while Rowlands, in an eye-catching yin-yang suit, plays a high-powered casting agent. It's a mother/daughter riff (one sucks her cheeks, the other rolls her eyes), but the explicit, almost hackneyed rejection of the Hollywood ethos with which the episode ends articulates the Jarmusch credo – albeit, having outsider Rowlands playing would-be Svengali to the

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS



Close encounter: Armin Mueller-Stahl, the New York cabdriver, and Giancarlo Esposito as his manic would-be passenger, above
Opposite: Jim Jarmusch, on his way to other places

near-bankable Ryder is given a further (and perhaps unintentional) twist by the kabuki 'naturalism' of Ryder's performance.

Jarmusch prospers in the realm of diminished expectations, and if I found *Night on Earth* a more enjoyable movie on second viewing – far from the hoopla that unavoidably surrounded its world premiere at the NYFF – it's because I was prepared to savour its small, sometimes cornball, pleasures. The brief illuminations – Ryder working her bubblegum in the frame's foreground while Rowlands works her cellular phone in the seat behind – are matched by the smoggy montage of deserted swimming-pools and decrepit fast-food joints that introduces LA, the edgy glamour of the New York City locations, the discordant hurdy-gurdy of Tom Waits' spare, jazzy nocturne, the velvet richness of Frederick Elmes' night photography. (Elmes, of course, is a reference point himself – having shot Cassavetes' *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* as well as David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*.)

To the degree that *Night on Earth* is a movie about acting, Jarmusch's least likely ensemble is his most memorable. The New York sequence has a Brooklyn-bound B-boy named YoYo (Giancarlo Esposito at his most manic) trying to hail a taxi in Times Square. He is reduced to waving money when a yellow cab, tortuously driven by an affable East German (Armin Mueller-Stahl), arrives as if by magic. The interaction is pure Jarmusch: the two men wear matching aviator hats, both with the ear-flaps out; the German is a former circus clown ("Get the fuck outta here", the astonished YoYo enthuses), while the New Yorker is no mean schoolyard performer.

The group is made complete when YoYo spots his sister-in-law Angela (Rosie Perez) striding through the deserted Lower East Side. Working in tandem with Esposito's ebull-

PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN BECKER



lience, Perez's patented head-bob – emphasising the fastest mouth in American movies – generates enough exoticism to warm the wide-eyed driver (not to mention Jarmusch), as the movie heads deeper into night, an other-worldly Fassbinder survivor piloting two savvy denizens of planet Spike Lee.

If Paris at 4am is necessarily more picturesque than Brooklyn, another immigrant driver (African actor Isaach de Bankolé) is having an even rougher night – the bandaid applied to his sullen brow is the bright pink signifier of some recent, if unspecified, mishap. After dumping two obnoxious African diplomats, he's close to tears – the darkness coalescing in the form of a blind woman (Béatrice Dalle, the eponymous, self-mutilated heroine of *Betty Blue*). Eyes rolling in her head, head swivelling on her neck, Dalle is beautiful and monstrous; the driver's fascination with his sightless fare is matched by her prickly conceit. His questions squelched by her contempt, his charity confounded by her self-sufficiency, he drops her off by the Seine. In a final sound gag, she hears his car crash and her downturned smear of a mouth twists into a smile.

Meanwhile, in a grungier Rome, Roberto Benigni cruises for a fare. Dalle's self-regard is nothing compared to Benigni's, as blinded by a pair of wraparound shades, he careers around piazzas and down alleys, singing, ranting, gesticulating – a manic monologue in search of an audience. Midway through he picks up a priest and, although initially put out ("bad luck, touch my balls"), soon turns his cab into a free-wheeling confessional – regaling the priest with descriptions of his affairs with pumpkins, sheep and sisters-in-law. In the end, *Night on Earth* moves from an agitated depression to an actual one. The final episode not only features Aki Kaurismäki regular Matti Pellonpää as the stoic driver with the tragic story, it invites allegory by naming him Mika (after the other Kaurismäki) and his drunken fare Aki.

True, Jarmusch has to fight a sentimental streak the way his drivers have to buck traffic. And yes, *Night on Earth* starts running out of gas well before dawn breaks like a wino's bottle on the Helsinki pavement. Yet the movie is something more than a linear ride. It has the feeling of an endless loop, filled with surprising echoes and unexpected cross-references. The gigantic Rocky and Bullwinkle and the LA Coliseum glimpsed in the opening sequence reappear after a fashion in subsequent episodes – and they're only the most traditional of archetypes.

Whether by chance or design, *Night on Earth* has a kind of overarching narrative, based on the evolution of cabbie and fare from one chance encounter to the next – one immigrant driver melting into another as Rosie Perez mutates into Béatrice Dalle, Benigni's confession segues into Pellonpää's – as though they were a single pair speeding through some vast celestial city on the road to eternity. *Night on Earth* may not mean any more than it is, but in it Jarmusch (and Elmes) have created a new constellation, call it the Cabdriver, and populated its stars with transmigrated souls.

'Night on Earth' opens on 31 July and is reviewed on page 59 of this issue

Jim Jarmusch talks with Peter Keogh about actors, filmic style and classical story-telling

Home and away

● Peter Keogh: Is this your neighbourhood?

Jim Jarmusch: I live a little east of here. I've lived here for fifteen years. It seems that each of your films moves further out of town. First to more distant American cities, and now this one is international. Is this a conscious trend? Not really. Though perhaps it has something to do with the fact that making my first film, *Permanent Vacation*, enabled me to travel. I got invited to different film festivals and travelled to promote my films and as a result I met a lot of people outside New York. And I tend to write things for specific people. This film is a good example of that.

Your films are inspired by the characters? Usually I write for specific actors and have an idea of a character I want to collaborate with them on. The story is suggested by those characters.

Does the gestation process take a long time? It differs. I carry them around for a long time, thinking about the actors and the characters to make for them. But then I usually write them pretty fast – for example, I wrote this one in eight or ten days.

I'm sure the production was more complicated than usual.

Just shooting in cars was complicated. Also shooting episodes in this way. Usually when you make a film it takes the first two weeks or so to understand how to work with your crew, but in this case, we prepared each story for about a week and shot for ten days and were out of there and on to the next place. And shooting at night outdoors in the winter and shooting with crews that didn't always speak English were complicated. But we had very good crews because we hired people in different cities based on their enthusiasm rather than on their experience. So we had enthusiastic people – they had to be to stand outside at night, all night.

Blind encounter:
Béatrice Dalle, the sightless Paris passenger who rejects the solicitation of her driver, right
Cold encounter:
Matti Pellonpää as the stoic driver in the Finnish episode, top right

This could be described as a low-rent version of Wenders' *'Until the End of the World'*. Did you know he was making his film at the same time?

I knew he was making a project that was taking him to cities around the world. But the films are very different in that his plot criss-crosses through all the locations, whereas ours is simultaneous stories that take place solely in each place rather than intercutting.

Blindness seems to be a motif in each episode.

On a lot of different levels. Although I'm perhaps not the best person to be analytical about that, it's in there. I was more aware of it while editing the film than while writing or directing it. Could you analyse it a bit?

Well, a lot of people have talked to me about the idea that people don't see what's right in front of them. In the Paris story, the girl is actually blind, but in a way it's the driver who's blind because he thinks her blindness must be a weakness, a flaw she has to deal with, a handicap. So he spends most of the conversation trying to find that weakness to support his preconception of her. And really she doesn't have a weakness. She's blind. That's it. It's who she is. In other stories people are also blind to each other and to their own situations.

Is any allusion to Béatrice Dalle's poking her eye out in *'Betty Blue'* intended?

No. I had forgotten that she had done that in *Betty Blue* until after making the film, when I saw *Betty Blue* again. Another motif in your films, beginning with *'Permanent Vacation'*, in which the character leaves and an emigré from France replaces him, is that of immigrants and rootlessness. Why is this an obsession? People ask me about that a lot. I don't know. When I was a student I lived in Paris for a year. It was the first time I'd been outside the United States and it really changed the way I thought about the world. It also inspired me to make films because I saw a lot of movies I hadn't seen in New York and I became fascinated by the form of cinema.

Do you see your own style growing more complicated since *'Stranger than Paradise'*, which consists of several long takes barely disrupted by a camera movement?

It changes depending on what the





story needs. This film is much more dialogue-oriented. Because we're in an enclosed space, I didn't have room for characters to express themselves physically or in moments when there is no dialogue as I could in *Stranger than Paradise*. That's what I like most about that film: the moments between dialogue when you understand what's happening between people without them saying anything. If you think about taking a taxi, it's something insignificant in your daily life; in a film when someone takes a taxi, you see them get in, then there's a cut, then you see them get out. So in a way the content of this film is made up of things that would usually be taken out. It's similar to what I like about *Stranger than Paradise* or *Down by Law*: the moments between what we think of as significant.

Your first film was very solipsistic and was focused on one character. This one deals with several characters and many points of view. It seems that each film has more characters, their stories are more episodic, people bounce off each other. Do you feel your scope is expanding in this way?

No. In fact, it's accidental. After *Mystery Train* I never intended to make another film that was episodic, or whatever you want to call this form; I had another script I had written which was about a single character. But for reasons too complicated to go into, that film was postponed and so I wrote this one very fast, out of frustration. It probably has the most impressive cast of any of your films, with Gena Rowlands, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Winona Ryder... Gena and Winona arrived through a very strange set of circumstances. I had just finished the first draft of the script and had written the LA story for two male characters. But I wasn't satisfied with it. I had written it for a specific actor who found just as I finished the script that he would not be available. And then in a two-day period I met Winona and Gena separately – completely by accident. Gena is one of my favourite actors, and Winona is one of my favourite young, American, female actors. In the course of my conversation with each I described the project and they both seemed interested. And then I rewrote the story for them and gave them

scripts and they both said yes. I wrote specifically for other actors too: Rosie Perez, Isaach de Bankolé, Béatrice Dalle, Roberto Benigni and three of the four actors in Finland. So I already had about 70 per cent of the actors in my head while writing and 30 per cent were due to circumstances.

Do you improvise once you start shooting? We do a lot of improvisation in the rehearsal process; in fact, we rehearse a lot of scenes that are not in the film but are the characters in character. They are scenes I play around with, and out of that I get a lot of new ideas. Then while we're shooting, how much improvising we do depends on the actors. Obviously I prefer to improvise in rehearsals because you're not burning money. But some actors need a longer leash. Roberto Benigni – he has to improvise. That's the strength of his acting. Giancarlo Esposito improvises a lot, too. The guys in Finland stayed much closer to the script once we'd rehearsed it. To me, the essence of each scene is what is important, not the exact dialogue. I like to find dialogue that I like and that the actors like, but there is an infinite number of ways of expressing something, so as long as the idea remains the same, the language can change. What's most important is that it seems natural and in character. *Has this always been your procedure or has it developed over time?*

It's always been my procedure, though I've become better at playing in the rehearsals and gradually focusing towards the script. In a way, I do everything backwards. Most directors get a script that they didn't write and then someone casts that. I start with the characters, the actors themselves. I'm much more a film-maker than a director can go in and take over a project, get it going, whereas for me it starts from a basic perception, sometimes not even accurate, of a person, an actor, a quality of that personality, and I want to grow a character on it. It's more organic. *Do you feel a kinship to Cassavetes, Scorsese and other directors who proceed in this organic fashion?*

I admire that way of working. Scorsese is from this neighbourhood. The way

people talk in his films is so realistic and strong, you never doubt that they are those characters. Language is very important to me. I love the way language takes on slang, gets mixed up by different influences, different cultures. And I like working in other languages. In *Mystery Train* I got the chance to direct actors in Japanese, which I don't speak. And I don't speak Finnish and I don't really speak Italian, though I understand it somewhat. *How do you write the dialogue in other languages – do you give the actors the idea and then let them work it out?*

I write the script in English and then I work with translators, or friends, or the actors themselves to find the right way to translate it. Language is just a kind of code we use, so as long as I know that the actors and I translate the script together and are very attentive to what kind of people these are, for example working-class Finnish guys and how they would talk, it's OK. In the Paris episode of *Night on Earth*, for example, the African driver speaks in a very different way from the girl, who speaks a kind of street French, slang, tough, rough French. His French is more like that of an immigrant. These things are important so that it feels real.

You're often referred to as a minimalist.

Do you agree with that label?

I think of minimalist as a label stuck on certain visual artists. But I don't really feel associated with them.

There are also literary minimalists – Raymond Carver, Anne Beatty.

I think maybe what they're saying is that the films are very light on plot and therefore minimal stylistically as well. My style is certainly not Byzantine or florid or elaborate. It's pretty simple. Reduced.

Would you say that your use of film language is very minimal, but is growing in vocabulary?

There are more cuts in it, but we're still limited as to what camera positions we can have. We also don't see nearly as much of the city from the point of view of the cab as I shot because when I was editing I couldn't find places to stick it in – it seemed superficial to go away from moments with the characters, which is what the film is about, just for the sake of other visual input.

Since 'Stranger than Paradise' your sensibility and style seem to have been dominant in American independent film-making, and also in film-making around the world, such as the Kaurismäki brothers. How do you account for it?

It's hard to respond to that. I don't know if my early films have influenced those people or whether it's a simultaneous reaction to things being glossy and quick cut – you know, using montage sequences à la *Miami Vice*, slap a music cue over a sequence in which the characters don't hear the music, the whole MTV aesthetic. Aki Kaurismäki is one of my favourite directors; I'm excited to see his new film, *La Vie de bohème*.

Do you see your films and those like yours as an alternative to a Hollywood that's

encroaching on all independent cinema?

I'm interested in types of film. In films there's such a wide scope – from porno films to Kung Fu to Michael Snow to Stan Brackage and Scorsese. Yet at the moment it seems that in Hollywood the idea is to saturate markets and release films wider and wider, so the margins get smaller.

Do you read reviews?

With my last film, *Mystery Train*, I reached a point where I was hardly reading anything, except when people told me about negative reviews, which I found more interesting. I respect other people's opinions of my films more than my own because I'm so inside – I don't even know if I like my own films, sometimes. I certainly never look at them again after I'm done with them. I'm at a point with this film where I don't need to see it again. I've been watching it for video transfers – the quality of prints and so on – so I'm only seeing the surface now; I've reached that point where I'm not seeing the film.

You like making the films, I imagine.

My favourite part is shooting: collaborating with all those different people and everybody working together towards one thing.

What are you working on now?

I have two scripts in the works which are very different from each other. I've never written two things at once before, but I've been making notes back and forth and carrying them around for a while. I haven't had time to start writing them because I've been travelling and promoting this film, getting prints ready and so on. *Which is your favourite of your movies?* *Down by Law*, I think, because shooting it was so much fun. Being in New Orleans was great and we had a really wild time. In retrospect I don't know how we got through it – it seemed as if we had a celebration after each night of shooting and I don't know physically how we got the film made. I tend to see my films in retrospect like home movies – I don't see the film any more, but I remember the experience of making it.

You have a mythic structure to that film:

I remember the scene where they come to the crossroads. And with this film the basic structure is the rotation of the earth.

I have a very classical way of thinking about telling stories; I still cling to that need to order things in a classical way. Like *Stranger than Paradise* is three acts with a coda, as is *Down by Law*: before prison, in prison and their escape from prison, with a coda at the end. So formally, I use that even though the acts don't necessarily follow the classical form where there is a conflict presented and resolved. In *Night on Earth* the crossing time zones, being on the planet at the same time and the sun going down at the beginning and coming up at the end helped me give an overall form. Bentley College invited me to be in a panel to discuss one of your films: I was wondering if they asked you too? Yes they did... when is that? It's tonight.

B. Ruby Rich reflects on US independent film from the 60s to the 90s

NEW TIMES

Decades have never divided neatly according to the calendar's arbitrary demarcations, and the 90s is no exception. To anyone attempting an overview of US independent film and video in this moment of global remodelling, the signs and portents are indecisive. Of course, there's always a case to be made. And I'm game enough to try it, having recently completed my own course of self-renovation, abdicating my ten-year bureaucratic post to return full time to the keyboard.

My arc of employment is not incidental. When I first accepted the job as director of the Film (and, eventually, Electronic Media) Program for the New York State Council on the Arts, Ronald Reagan had just won the presidential election. I intended to stay the course through four years of Republican rule and then return to the fray. Instead, Reagan was re-elected. I held on for another four years, determined to preserve funding for the film and video culture I cared about so much. Then George Bush won the next election. I was losing my battle to outstay the Republicans.

In a very real way, however, the film and video world has outstayed the Republicans – or, rather, outflanked them. In 1981, independent film was rapidly coalescing into a hierarchical pyramid, with dramatic features – home-grown art cinema – at the top, documentary shunted aside, and short work nearly obsolete. Investment replaced public funding, film-makers acquired guild training in film schools, and much of the field changed from oppositional sector to industry affiliate. By 1989, when Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies and videotape* made a splash at the Sundance Film Festival, he could tell a national radio audience that he didn't consider himself a part of any movement.

He was telling the truth. Despite the exceptions (like Michael Moore), documentary film-makers were shut out in the cold, as the public television system and the National Endowment for the Humanities became politicised and, that done, retreated from previous support. Ken (*The Civil War*) Burns, with his corporate support, became the new golden boy.

Something had to give, and something did. Contradictions abound. In the commercial zone, Spike Lee led a wave of black film-making that arrived in synch with rap music's crossover appeal and changed the colour of Hollywood right up to this year's Academy

Award nominations. In television, cable offered the promise of public access, and grassroots advocates seized on models like Paper Tiger or Deep Dish to redemocratised the medium. Commercial upstarts like MTV and the various 'reality-based' television shows, despite their obvious drawbacks, offered models of boundary-crossing and 'genre-bending' to enliven aesthetics debates. In video, the invention of low-cost, low-tech equipment like Hi-8 and Super-VHS destroyed the old hierarchies of format, revolutionising production.

1989, 1990, 1991, 1992. Culture became a battleground in the United States. The reproduction of the image in film, video and photography are at the centre of the attacks. The right wing found a cheap way to get attention; the Soviet Union ceased to exist; the forces of anti-communism needed a new target; enemies had to be found within.

OK, that's part of the story. But there's more. The 80s had been a time of shock over Aids, but by the end of the decade, responses were forming that went beyond the literal necessities of health care or governmental response: works began to emerge that could put love into conversation with rage and that could fashion, out of emotional trauma, a cultural response. For women, emerging from the Sex Wars of the 80s, questions of sexual identity became increasingly central. For lesbians, negotiating anew the ambiguous terrain of object choice and versus identity, video became an essential route. Art, in other words, began to assume once again its age-old function as an agent of transformation, a method for making sense of the world, a vehicle for change at the level of consciousness, if not socio-political organisation.

It is fortuitous, to be sure, that these shifts of need and desire on the part of gay men and lesbians coincided with a refashioning of video and film aesthetics. "As far as I'm concerned, video is the 16mm of the 90s". Thus spoke an undergraduate in my documentary film class at Berkeley this spring, forced weekly to reconcile Joan Braderman with Jean Rouch, or Sadie Benning with Erroll Morris. She isn't wrong. Emerging from art schools instead of guilds, video today displays the spirit of invention and transgression that long ago characterised 'experimental' film.

To explain the force of lesbian and gay film/video in the 90s, you'd have to add to technological and aesthetic evolutions the infinitely more essential, and unpredictable, element of historical synchronicity – that moment when the artist and her/his culture, historical forces and aesthetic expression all line up like stars over a Mayan temple (sorry, I just visited the Yucatan) and achieve critical mass. It's happened before. In the 60s, 'underground' film-making found a match in the alternative press and 'counterculture' expressions, leading to its ability to embody the aspirations and preoccupations of

its time. In the 70s, the feminist movement gave an impetus to women's film-making that managed to merge aesthetics and empowerment, much as the chicano movement had emboldened the work of chicano film-makers, and the civil rights movement facilitated the rise of black artists in television, documentary, and eventually feature production. In the UK, in the 80s, I suspect it was a similar sort of resurgent energy, combining film education with community politics and a new television channel, that led to the growth of the black workshops and to the stylistic daring of their film productions.

Today, in the US, there is a search for origins and identities that is motivated, in part, by that collapse of old categories. The fossilised model of the 'two avant-gardes', predicated on a binarism of form and content has, today, become irrelevant to a 90s film/video praxis that proceeds from newly negotiated subject positions and repositions both artist and audience. For film-makers like Camille Billops and Marco Williams, autobiography is a means to a new black documentary style. For Trinh T. Minh-ha, the repositioning of cultural anthropology provides a meta-critique of fact-based film-making in general. For young women of colour working in personal forms of film and video, Julie Dash has become a model of how to reconcile emotions and narrative with cultural specificity. For a new generation of lesbian and gay male artists, genre lines are being ignored entirely in the effort to express a new 'queer' (for all the problems with the word) sensibility (ditto).

Toni Cade Bambara has spoken of the importance of what she calls the "authenticating audience". It is this connection between film- or video-makers and their communities that animates work, sparks stylistic evolutions, and brings about profound changes in the canons. It is this connection that is fuelling the explosion, at the level of both production and reception, in gay male and lesbian films and videotapes today, making the phenomenon impossible to ignore. Whether there's a whole new movement coalescing here or simply a return to older trends, or even a false start, is probably impossible to assess at this moment. But read the signs. In San Francisco this year, for instance, the gay and lesbian festival that's been presented annually for sixteen years went ballistic: submissions of films and videotapes rose from 170 last year to 270 this year, and attendance increased 100 per cent. The combination of ACT UP activism and right-wing attack (Todd Haynes and Annie Sprinkle last year, Marion Riggs now) has created a passion in the public to see what all the fuss is about and to legitimate these targets with its presence. With gay and lesbian studies proliferating in academia, and new journals and magazines starting up overnight, support for a new cinema and video is clearly present.

The push and pull of heroism and

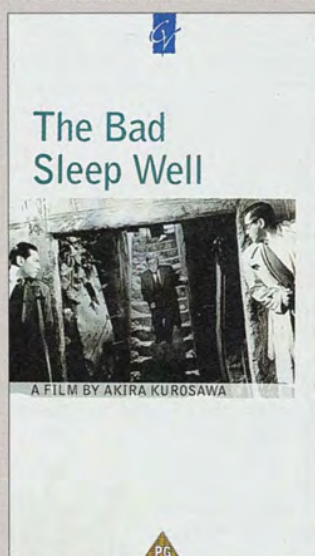
demonisation is giving rise to new work which, originating in the concerns of US gay and lesbian communities, bounces its meanings back over audiences more numerous and diverse than any responding to such work before. At the Sundance Film Festival, in Berlin, at the New Directors Festival this spring in New York, pride of place went to the 'queer new wave' of US films on gay themes by young film-makers like Christopher (*The Hours and Times*) Münch, Gregg (*The Living End*) Araki, Tom (*Swoon*) Kalin. Meanwhile, from the Walker Art Center to the Museum of Modern Art, lesbian video has been burning new subjectivities on to the video monitors and retinas of its audience, from Jean (*L is For the Way You Look*) Carlomusto to Sadie (*It Wasn't Love*) Benning to Cheryl (*She Don't Fade*) Dunye.

Past and present are merging in new fantasies of introspection, revision, and recuperation. A black woman in search of a new girlfriend finds the wrong one, as her white friend faces the audience and tries to narrate her progression. Scenes of lovemaking are interrupted by instructions to the crew, while actors deconstruct their own characterisations. A teenager finds the girl of her dreams, but their road movie never gets out of the parking lot. Black and white* low-tech images underline the immateriality of desire. Two men, both HIV positive, decide they have nothing to lose. The structure of porn coincides with that of post-modern narrative for a new version of picaresque adventure. Boys hot on sex and crime suddenly appear in a courtroom cleared of women, with psychology displacing realism in the construction of physical space.

Inevitably, the arrival of these sorts of films and videotapes will retroactively create a new canon out of their antecedents. As a result, I suspect the history of US independent cinema itself, from the 60s through the 80s, may be up for some reconsideration and refashioning. The boys of the 'New American Cinema' – Kenneth Anger, Gregory Markopoulos, James Broughton – are going to look different from this new vantage point. Carolee Schneeman is already undergoing a revival, as is Shirley Clarke in her *Portrait of Jason* phase. Parker Tyler is overdue for rediscovery. George Kuchar, having made the transition from film to video, is probably the single most important figure in the popularisation of ultra-low-budget video-making, one of the first to make even the art world sit up and take notice of Video-8 as a serious medium.

If the revision of avant-garde film history is righteous, then the women of this tradition, however rare, have to be heeded as much as the men. To be sure, they're harder to find, given the conditions of production of this work. But gender inequity remains the downside of 'queer' culture. Should Andy Warhol emerge in a new guise, per a revisionist queer history, Valerie Solanas had better command our attention, too.

Forthcoming Releases from Connoisseur Video



The Bad Sleep Well

Directed by
Akira Kurosawa
Japan 1960/Certificate PG
Price £14.99 plus p&p

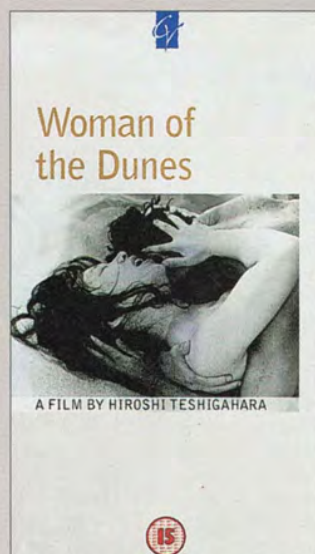


The great Japanese director Kurosawa moved happily between period and contemporary in his films, and in *The Bad Sleep Well* he presents a fine example of the latter.

As with many of Kurosawa's films, the narrative is only a fraction of the film's value: excellent performances, masterly

camerawork, echoes of Shakespeare... all of these combine to produce a highly significant and important work in this director's oeuvre.

Although rarely seen in this country, Connoisseur have had access to a print of the highest quality, and present the film in its original 'scope ratio.



Woman of the Dunes

Directed by
Hiroshi Teshigahara
Japan 1964/Certificate 15
Price £14.99 plus p&p



Telling the tale of a simple yet bizarre situation, Teshigahara creates a film of great riches. From overpowering images of the ever-shifting sand to quite breathtaking photographs of the skin of the two protagonists, the film builds into a

highly-charged and remarkably sensual exploration of the human condition.

The film has the additional attraction of a score from Toru Takemitsu which brings its own brooding, menacing flavour to the whole.

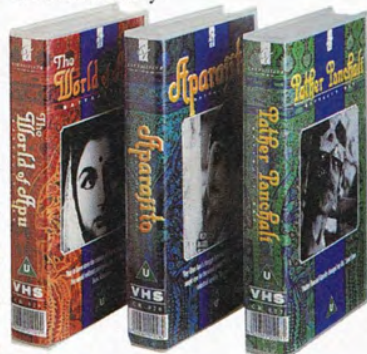
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● The floorshow at St Petersburg's Hotel Helen starts early. It also starts cold in every sense of the word: the only available response is cringing embarrassment. Outside, the Fontanka, one of the city's numerous canals, is frozen over. The ice, something Sobchak's sad city has in abundance, is indeed part of the reason for our visit.

Mixed pedigree

A key section of Virginia Woolf's 1928 'novel' *Orlando* is set during the Great Frost of 1604, the year the Thames froze over. For both director Sally Potter and lead actor Tilda Swinton, the novel, with its ecstatic style and open celebration of androgyny, proved revelatory when they read it in the late 60s. Swinton was Potter's first choice for the eponymous hero-heroine from the time the idea of filming Woolf's novel was broached some four years ago. Yet despite the author's canonical position in both English and feminist literature, finding financial backing for the project proved difficult.

"The Americans didn't understand it at all," says Swinton, "but the Russians from the beginning said, 'Androgyny and immortality? We can handle that!'" And the first financial commitment came from them, after which British Screen came aboard with some 50 per cent of

Melting histories: Tilda Swinton, opposite, as Orlando, a "contemporary character", according to director Sally Potter; Orlando and her lover Sasha (Charlotte Valendrey), below

the £6.5 million budget. The rest comes from four other European sources: a purely financial involvement from Italy; sound crew and actor Charlotte Valendrey, who plays Orlando's first love, Sasha, from France; the production design team (and regular collaborators of Peter Greenaway) Ben van Os and Jan Roelfs from the Netherlands; and cinematographer Alexei Rodionov, responsible for the camerawork on Elem Klimov's seminal *glasnost* film *Come and See*, from Russia. It is a mixed pedigree indicative of a moment when notions of national cinema are dissolving and possibilities for a European cinema are being explored. It is also a point at which the nation state is a contentious issue.

It was important to both Potter and producer Christopher Sheppard that the crucial scenes on the frozen river be played as much as possible for real. (It is on the ice that Orlando meets his first love, and its melting signals his abandonment.) The frozen river is also the scene of Orlando's first 'Sapphic' encounter (to use Woolf's own term, even if, in strictly narrative terms, Orlando is at this point male).

For ice, the production had a choice between Canada, Scandinavia and Russia. Russia ►

FIRE AND ICE

In the cold St Petersburg spring, Sally Potter films Virginia Woolf's 'Orlando'. Verina Glaessner reports



◀ seemed most promising, not only because of the novel's Russian content (Sasha is a Russian princess) but because the then Soviet Union also offered persuasively oriental locations able to stand in for the book's Constantinople. The country in any case held a fascination for Potter: in 1987/8 she had made a Channel 4 documentary, *I am an Ox, I am a Horse, I am a Man, I am a Woman*, tracing the history of Russia through the use of women in film from the silent days to the present. "I felt", she says, "that Russian film had a kind of faithfulness to the scene that did not allow itself to be distracted by glamour. Tarkovsky, for instance, was able to conjure a sense of mystery out of unusual juxtapositions, which is what I felt *Orlando* would need".

"From the beginning", says Sheppard, "we were adamant that we weren't going to do a facilities deal. We wanted full Russian involvement on an equal-partner basis". Protracted



Regal desires: Quentin Crisp as Elizabeth I in Sally Potter's film, in which sex and gender are always fluid and unstable

negotiations, during which the old Soviet Union vanished, led away from the more Hollywood-oriented Mosfilm Studios to Lenfilm, a studio with a strong reputation for innovative work. (Mosfilm has since signed a deal with Roger Corman that could signal new possibilities for mining Russia's rich seam of gothic/symbolist writing.) But even at Lenfilm, the notion of a 'poor' western cinema needed explanation. "It was a time when the old state-funded studio system was breaking up and large numbers of senior former employees were setting up independently with wild expectations of large dollar deals", explains Sheppard. And he sees *Orlando* as "the first fully fledged Russian-British co-production. Films like *Assassin of the Tsar* and *Lost in Siberia* simply lent a western gloss to what were essentially Russian projects, while films like *The Russia House* bring everything in".

The frozen Thames turns out not to be the Neva or even the Fontanka canal, but an outdoor ice rink in a park not far from central St Petersburg. A hangar-like building serves for make-up, costumes, dressing-rooms and canteen. Soldiers from the erstwhile Red, now Russian, army sip coffee. They are in the employ of Lenfilm and as night and cold set in they tend the ice and dispense 'snow' as required, occasionally pausing to snap souvenir photographs. In one of the grey pavilions on the ice, the features of Tilda Swinton undergo transformation. She too is clad in black and steely grey. In one of the film's 'puns',

Orlando, red of hair and pale of skin, resembles both the Lely miniature referred to by Woolf in the novel and the Hatfield House portrait of Elizabeth I, in which the young queen's frank gaze is undercut by the ever-attentive ears and eyes embroidered on her robe. In the film, Elizabeth is played by Quentin Crisp.

The longest love letter

The historical scope of the novel and the thematic role history plays within it make *Orlando* an unusually demanding project for its production designers. Each period of the book's 400-year span must be captured in essence, something van Os and Roelfs attempt by extensive use of only a few, typical objects from each period. They have also raided coffee-table books of the period (a Hamlyn book on Elizabethan England sits on top of Roy Strong's *Splendour at the Court*). "It is not a question of historical reproduction", they claim.

In collaboration with Potter, van Os and Roelfs have devised a 'colour coding' for each of the narrative's many historical periods, which are sharply delineated and fetishistically rendered in Woolf's prose. "The England of Elizabeth is gold and red, that of James grey and silver, the eighteenth century is dominated by a powdery blue, and so on. We took the blue we use for Constantinople, in fact Khiva in Uzbekistan, from the blue of the tiles there, but for the moment when Orlando becomes a woman, we drape the room with white". Van Os and Roelfs work closely with the cinematographer, Rodionov, and the lighting people as well as with Potter herself: "It is the lighting that brings it all to life".

Woolf's novel is about history and sexuality (despite her protests to the contrary), time and gender, androgyny and immortality. The protagonist is sixteen years old and male when the novel opens in the reign of Elizabeth I; at the age of thirty s/he becomes a woman and remains so through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the book's close in 1928. It is a novel written with a heightened awareness of desire (in its almost contemporary companion piece, *A Room of One's Own*, the guiding emotion is anger). "I am launched", wrote Woolf in one of her letters, "somewhat furtively but with all the more passion upon *Orlando*".

Woolf based the central character on her friend and lover, Vita Sackville-West, and photographs of Vita as Orlando adorned the first edition. Vita's son, Nigel Nicolson, has called it "the longest and most charming love letter in history". In the novel, Vita is placed within a fantastic rewriting of her own and her family's history – a rewriting which erases the denial by law (because of gender) of her inheritance. Vita's wayward lover, Violet Trefusis, appears as Sasha; her husband, Harold Nicolson, as Shelmerdine, Orlando's first love upon assuming the form of a woman. Vita's own journey to Moscow, from where she wrote to Woolf of carriages crossing the frozen river as if it were a road, finds its echo in the book, as does her visit with Harold to Constantinople.

On the novel's publication, the *Daily Mail* characteristically headed its review, 'A Fantastic Biography. Mrs H. Nicolson and Orlando. 300

Years as Man and Woman' and the book outsold Woolf's previous novel. "Sapphism is to be suggested", Woolf had written when the project was still called *The Jessamy Brides*, "satire and wildness". It was to be an "escapade" in writing.

Sally Potter has picked up the notion of an "escapade" in her script, which conveys the spirit of fun, fantasy and caricature that Woolf applied to her subject. While acknowledging the book's origins in the life of Vita Sackville-West, and indeed drawing the idea of casting the protagonist as a woman throughout implicitly from Woolf's own 'casting' of Vita in that role, Potter sees the scope of the book as much wider. "It is more broadly about history, identity, reading, writing and remembering. Although Woolf works in a lot of literary jokes, we are not making a film about literature. What interests me is how the book explores the way the English place themselves in the world in relation to their past. There is an addiction in English culture to mythologies of the past, which is not the same thing as having a sense of history. And many of these mythologies are rooted in the reign of Elizabeth I, which provides the origin for a particular understanding of national identity. It is a familiar accusation that the English are unable to let go of the past. In the film, Orlando gradually achieves this: she loses everything, but gains herself in the process".

The view from the Netherlands is subtly different: to van Os, the novel explores "the tragedy of the power of England that lasted through centuries and then ended. It is also, of course, about Vita, who was never the writer she wanted to be and became a gardener". Not, perhaps, a notion of failure to which the British would subscribe.

Although Woolf closed the novel in 1928, the film brings the story into the present, a present that is suggested in the speed and modernism of the book's final chapter. "It is not a historical film. *Orlando* is a completely contemporary character", claims Potter.

Beyond gender

"For me", says Potter, "*Orlando* is not so much about femininity and difference as about Woolf's notion of an essential self that lies beyond gender. She says that 'Up to the age of thirty Orlando was a man and then when she became a woman she was not different but just a different sex'. If the self is so fluid, then so too must be biography, the literary category into which Woolf placed *Orlando*. And indeed sections of *Orlando* are devoted to considering the nature of biography and the differences between biographies of men and of women (the one predicated on action, the other on romance). Other passages play with the idea of dismantling the project entirely by "writing herself into a corner" of inaction. (Potter's 1979 film *Thriller* pertinently rewrote *La Bohème* from Mimi's point of view.)

"Gender is turned on its head in *Orlando*", says Potter, "but issues of class remain unaddressed. We try to turn class on its head as well. We see Orlando as someone emerging out of a particular class in sympathetic struggle".

Part of the struggle of making any film lies

Alexei Rodionov, cinematographer, on Russian cinema, past and future

I entered the film industry in the conventional way. I was interested in photography and painting and so I enrolled at the State Institute of Cinematography in Moscow and at the specialist Laboratory of Directors of Photography. It is with the camera that my interest lies, not with directing. I like to work with the camera – hands-on – to control the lighting and to work closely with the director.

"I try to draw out the directors I work with. I shared a flat with Klimov when we were making 'Come and See' and every moment was taken up with discussing it. Kira Muratova, with whom I worked on 'Among Grey Stones' – adapted from a Korolenko story about homeless children in nineteenth-century Russia – is very spontaneous: she is not

interested in detail and when I would offer her a selection of ways to frame a shot, she would refuse even to look through the camera. "You choose!", she would tell me.

"I find the western way of filming very closed: it works well when you have the back-up, but here the system is different. Perhaps if we are to learn from each other, we should both be more flexible. I know that in the west you find Russian films too dark and slow, but from my point of view, western films are often overlit and too objectively shot. I find the editing choppy and distracting. On Alexei Gherman's 'My Friend Ivan Lapshin', we deliberately refrained from using the reverse angle at all, telling the story completely from the point of view of the camera.

"We now look back on the situation here three years ago as a golden age. Our infrastructure has collapsed.

The last time our technical base was updated was in the late 70s or early 80s. Yet we are not short of money to make films. The entrepreneur Tagi-Zade is said to have offered to fund new films by Gleb Panfilov, Klimov and Gherman, but they all refused, perhaps out of fear of loss of artistic control or qualms about the source of the money.

"There are signs that our people are beginning to tire of foreign films, which show a world so different from our own. I think Russian democracy will be a strange thing, perhaps not what you might call democracy elsewhere. We are not a political people... if you want a comparison with British history, you could say we are at about the time of Oliver Cromwell. Personally I would like to see a constitutional monarchy in Russia, which I believe would help by taking the bitterness out of some of our power struggles.

in turning the foreignness of a location to advantage. And indeed in St Petersburg foreignness creates tensions on both sides, exemplified by the elaborate arrangements for meals, whereby tables are booked and groups bussed to one or other of the city's private restaurants, where good food is served in surroundings of Miss Havisham-like decay at a price that ensures the exclusion of the Russians, who are unwilling to stake the equivalent of a month's wages on a meal.

The old studio system has left a well-publicised legacy of inefficiency and lack of initiative. But at the heart of some of the conflicts lie competing notions of professionalism – for example, between the unit's need to can between one and a half and two minutes of film a day to stay within budget and the divorce of time and money that allowed Klimov to take nine months to shoot a film and to spend a day where necessary thinking through a set-up.

Simon Perry waxes enthusiastic about the more positive legacy of the studio system: "The huge pool of sheer old-fashioned technical skill refined through years of unbroken continuity of production". And Potter delights in the impressive "cineliteracy" of those with whom she works, the "shared sense of irony and understatement". She quotes the example of Powell and Pressburger, an ideal marriage between (East) Europe and Britain that "liberated a very particular Englishness".

Polyglot audience

Other factors mark out Russian cinema. There is the need to redefine the status and mode of address of film-makers long required to claim the high moral ground of 'art' within a monolithically structured industry. And there are the effects of an economy in which the legal structures and commercial practices that would allow the flourishing of a thousand neighbourhood cinemas (or video stores) are not yet in place and the hiatus before privatisation allows only the most primitive of commercial exchanges.

Both Sheppard and Perry are concerned about the future of Russian film. Perry sees a threat in the influx of Hollywood companies in search of cheap facilities deals who will unrealistically raise prices and expectations. With the example of "an almost 100 per cent American occupancy of British screens" in mind, he reads the Russian fascination with Hollywood as ill-founded and destructive. He envisages a more positive future for both Britain and Russia in Europe (arguably it is the French who have made the most intelligent running so far, signing up directors who are both interesting and bold). "Who knows, writing for a polyglot audience may even help to concentrate the minds of our screenwriters on the fact that film is after all a visual medium".

Very different economic constraints seem to have forced a choice between hermeticism and loss of identity on both the Russian and British industries. In its modest way, Potter and Sheppard's project suggests that the choice may be a false one. Certainly Woolf's study of the self seeking definition against a revived history could hardly be more topical.



Revealing robes: Orlando as woman in a film where dress acts as both disguise and revelation

Freewheeling anarchy, disrespectful desire and polymorphous smut are the hallmarks of the 'Carry On' films, claims Andy Medhurst

CARRY ON CAMP



The old jokes are...:
Barbara Windsor and Jim Dale
in 'Carry On Again Doctor'



Facial elasticities:
Charles Hawtrey and
Kenneth Williams, above,
and Hattie Jacques, left,
in 'Carry On Matron'



● Reputations fluctuate, critical and popular fashions never stand still, but even so, the rise of the *Carry On* films from cultural pariahs to cult status is a striking journey. Cult films, after all, tend to be rambling, moody, foreign, inordinately pleased with themselves, full of saxophones and diners and Harry Dean Stanton, whereas the *Carry Ons* are a brisk, beaming, no-nonsense coachload of cliché and innuendo. They are films that display a dread of significance, a refusal of nuance, an indifference to complexity that is almost shocking – and at the same time deeply wonderful.

There's no point in hiding my feelings about this: I write as a fan, a devotee, a disciple. I grew up with the things, they're part of my way of understanding myself and my cultural history. I can never hear the word 'infamy' without responding 'they've all got it in for me'. So if this means nothing to you, I suggest you turn to another page; there's probably an article about Tarkovsky somewhere in the magazine that will keep you happy.

I have my doubts, though, about some aspects of the *Carry On* cult. The films seem to have become pawns in a strange new twist of the game of Political Correctness. The cast of the new *Carry on Columbus* (thirtieth in the series, and the first since 1978) includes performers associated with the inadequate but tenacious label of 'alternative comedy' – Alexei Sayle, Rik Mayall, Julian Clary – and it's this that sets alarm bells ringing. Was the new *Carry On* to be ideologically policed and purified? Won't the inclusion of this new generation of student favourites spoil the traditions of 'hon-

est vulgarity'? Aren't Kenneth Williams and Sid James going to be turning in their graves?

There's something very patronising underlying such questions, an implication that the old *Carry Ons* were an innocent, charming peasant art form. Critics such as *The Guardian's* Toby Young (and let's face it, what could someone called Toby know about popular culture?) seem to want to fetishise the series for all the wrong reasons, to go slumming in its quaintness, to revel in its very *Political Incorrectness*. The whole debate seems misplaced to me, since stereotyping is the language in which these films are made: pinched bums, big tits, screaming queens and henpecked husbands are the conditions of their existence. Liberal concern (or its obverse, patrician dabbling in naughtily murky waters) is supremely irrelevant.

So why do I love these films so much? Partly because they seem always to have been there. Look at the dates they span – from 1958 to 1978, from Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson to the Sex Pistols: several cultural lifetimes. And what was it that made the *Carry Ons* so popular at the fickle box office?

It's a chicken-and-egg kind of answer, but their very regularity and familiarity kept the audiences regularly and familiarly coming back. Popular culture is full of repetition; it doesn't feel the need always to be chasing the spectacularly new or the challengingly difficult. A *Carry On* is, was and will always be a known quantity: there's no risk, no danger, no threat of disappointment. Predictability and comfort are not culturally respectable discourses, but they can be tremendously satisfy-

ing – just ask the people who go to Blackpool every year.

The seaside analogy is, I think, a key one. *Carry Ons* are like holidays (the boarding-house and fry-up kind, not the discover-the-unexplored-secrets-of-Patagonia monstrosities), or works' outings, or coach trips, or any other kind of piss-ups where indulgence and irresponsibility offer temporary escape from everyday tedium. *Carry On At Your Convenience* actually includes this as part of its narrative, showing how workplace hierarchies and rivalries are forgotten in the carnivalesque debaucheries of the seaside once the day trip from the toilet factory arrives at Brighton.

Seaside and holiday settings become increasingly frequent towards the end of the series – in *Camping*, *Abroad* and *Girls* – and it's possible to speculate that by this point the series' style of humour was so established and popular that it no longer needed the excuse of the institutional settings it had begun with (*Sergeant*, *Nurse*, *Teacher*) or the generic parodies that constitute for many fans its 60s golden age (*Spying*, *Cleo*, *Cowboy*). *Carry On* stage shows have more than once taken their rightful place at the ends of piers – imagine being able to see Barbara Windsor, ride on a dodgem car and eat toffee apples all on the same day. These are the pleasures of cheap glamour, sticky allure and instant gratification rather than worthily self-righteous nourishment – candyfloss, not tofu. A *Carry On* with no artificial colourings or added sweeteners is a contradiction in terms.

But what's all this got to do with cinema as an art form? Absolutely nothing, of course. The



Beauty and the Beast:
Amanda Barrie and
Sid James in 'Carry On Cleo'



Pantomime dame:
Charles Hawtrey in
'Carry On Up The Khyber'



Pleasures and pains:
Barbara Windsor and Kenneth
Williams, above, and Sid
James and Valerie Von Ost,
left, in 'Carry On Doctor'



important reference points for the series are almost entirely extra-cinematic: music hall, circus, radio comedy, seaside postcards and working-class leisure culture in general. There were other successful series of British comedies begun in the 50s, most notably the magnificent *St Trinian's* and the laborious *Doctor* films, but these were one-joke ideas and short-lived – and in any case, the medical *Carry Ons*, fixated with unerring glee on bowels and bedpans, soon exposed the *Doctor* films for the prissy bourgeois evasions they so clearly were. The *Carry Ons* kept going, however, because they offered not so much a particular set of gags as a comic way of seeing the world that had its roots outside the ghetto of cinema.

Thus when a baffled American critic complained in 1960 that the *Carry Ons* were “distinguished by a vivid lack of those qualities of wit and understatement for which British comedy is famous” (*New Yorker*) you couldn't help but feel sorry for the poor ignorant Yank. Translating his baffled *cri de coeur* into what it really means, he's asking where Alec Guinness is – he's scared and lost because these films are *not Ealing*. And these anxieties haven't gone away, either. In this very magazine, last year, Hanif Kureishi cited his interest in British film comedy as opposed to certain other cinematic traditions. It was there on the front cover – “When I was a kid, I wasn't watching Godard films, I was watching *I'm All Right Jack*”. But inside, the full quote ran: “When I was a kid, I wasn't sitting in the cinema watching Godard films, I was watching *Carry On Camping* and *I'm All Right Jack*”. I'm not suggesting any kind of conspiracy,

just pointing out that even now, Peter Sellers signals a cultural cachet that will never, ever belong to Charles Hawtrey – and if you want a terribly old-fashioned word that encapsulates what I'm talking about, that word is *class*.

Which brings me back to my worries about the cultifying of the *Carry Ons*, since the bestowing of cult status is often a kind of class appropriation. Have people called Toby *always* liked these films like I have? I apologise for the intrusive autobiographical tone once again, but then British culture is notoriously full of academics and intellectuals looking over their newly middle-class shoulders at their working-class upbringings, so why shouldn't I join in? If I'm being honest, one of the strongest attractions of the *Carry On* films for me is that through them I can pretend I'm not a university lecturer any more and bolt back to another time and life. More than that, I suspect I use films like this precisely to summon up and sustain fantasies about origins and affiliations that are no longer uncomplicatedly mine, though it isn't all fantasy – I do recall *Cabby*, *Matron* and others from numerous childhood viewings. The important point here is that these were viewings on television, since the *Carry Ons* have been cheap and easy schedule-fillers for as long as I can remember. This again only serves to add to that crucial dimension of familiarity that I've cited above, and further locates the films in the broader popular-cultural sphere, since I first saw most of them not at the Odeon, but after *Crackerjack* or before *Crossroads*.

In order to try to ground these increasingly sprawling thoughts in some specific examples,

it might be useful to take one of the films and look at it in detail, for which purpose I've chosen *Carry On Girls*. But before doing this, some brief comments on the basic comic strategies of the series might be useful. There are three which recur in all the films. They all use *slapstick*, various combinations of chases, pratfalls, fights and chaotic destruction; they draw heavily on *farce* – plenty of bedroom doors and unexpected entrances, dropped trousers and burst blouses, cupboard doors flung open to reveal unlikely couplings; and justly their most celebrated feature, their great comic glory, is the reliance on *innuendo*.

Rather than quote great hunks of mucky dialogue as proof of this, it might be easier simply to list some of the more memorable character names. There are curvaceous women such as Hope Springs, Miss Allcock and WPC Passworthy, and insatiable men like Gladstone Screwer, Dr Nookey and Arthur Upmore; unlikely aristocrats including Sir Sidney Ruff-Diamond and Sir Roger de Lodgerly, and funny foreigners such as Anna Vrooshka, Upsidasi, Bungdit Din and the Duc de Pommfrit; and best of all there are the toilet troupe – W. C. Boggs, Senns Pod, Dr Stoppidge, Citizen Bidet, the Khasi of Kalabar and (with gloriously gratifying inevitability) Dan Dann the lavatory man. My own personal favourite is the puritanical local councillor who opposes the beauty contest in *Carry On Girls*, who rejoices in the splendidly eighteenth-century appellation of Augusta Prodworthy. It's the writer Talbot Rothwell, who took charge of the scripts from *Cabby* to *Dick*, who deserves the credit for making ►

◀ the link between *Carry On* and innuendo indelible. It's clearly present in the earlier films written by Norman Hudis (one or two of the above names are his), but there it sits alongside a certain warm-heartedness that Rothwell ruthlessly expunged as his tenure developed. Authorship of the *Carry Ons* is not a topic that need detain anyone for long – Peter Rogers devised the overall concept after striking unexpectedly lucky with *Sergeant*, which was never intended to spark off any further films, and went on to produce them all. Gerald Thomas directed each time.

Yet to audiences, it was the performers who mattered most – performers rather than stars, since the films were very much an ensemble effort. A parallel could be drawn with the established companies of actors in radio comedies, where indeed many of the *Carry On* team first made their names. The point that these were actors who played comedy, rather than comedians, is also crucial – famous stand-up comics were occasionally used, most memorably Ted Ray and Frankie Howerd, but their wider career personas did not always sit easily with the team-spirit ethos of the films. Howerd is worth dwelling on, since in many people's minds he was a key player in the series, despite the fact that he appeared in only two: *Doctor* and *Up The Jungle*. This apparent confusion is perhaps to be accounted for by Howerd's celebrated television series, *Up Pompeii*, also scripted by Rothwell and a typically scandalous concoction of equal measures of dirt and corn that clearly borrowed heavily from *Carry on Cleo*.

Radio was a major influence, then, but the films modified that influence in one key respect. In radio comedy, characters identified themselves through catchphrases, immediately recognisable ways of announcing their entrance into the sound-only text. In *Carry Ons*, the performers traded on their cartoon-like visual recognisability, but also on what could be called *catchphrasings* – not so much repeated words as vocal signatures, modes of expression and delivery that unleash a pleasurable wave of recognition and expectation in the audience.

Carry on Girls is the twenty-fifth film in the series, released in 1973. It would win few nominations as the best, but perhaps its status as a routinely successful piece of product rather than an undeniable gem makes it more suitable for a relatively dispassionate analysis.

The opening minutes map out what will follow. It's raining, at the seaside, in England. A morose nuclear family huddles in a seafront shelter. Audience recognition and identification is secured with maximum efficiency. The name of the town is Fircombe – our first dirty pun. A stray dog cocks its leg and pisses on a publicity poster – our first bodily function. A meeting of the council is taking place, at which we recognise Kenneth Connor and Sid James – the fun's about to start. Sid, face like a bag of spanners, suggests a beauty contest to promote tourism in the town – beauty contest plus Sid guarantees subsequent slap-and-tickle. Sid's plan is opposed by Councillor Prodworthy – women have no sense of humour, or at least primly officious women don't. She defends the town, points to its aver-



Boys will be girls: Bernard Bresslaw in the paradigmatic 'Carry On Girls'

age rainfall figures. Sid's reply: "If you think nine inches is an average one, you've been spoiled" – our first classic, Rothwellian line. The plot is now sketched out, Sid versus Prodworthy, fun versus puritanism, us versus them.

It's all there, the signposts are reassuringly in place, we can write the rest of the script for ourselves, but this is part of the pleasure rather than a problem. We know what we're getting, and above all we know this because we have heard Sid James laugh – probably the key signifier of the whole series, an incomparable leitmotif of gurgling, gargling, lecherous desire. It's the sound that lets us know we're among mates.

Girls does offer a slight deviation from series norms, however, by introducing social comment – in a typically crude and irresistibly unfair way, of course. Councillor Prodworthy's appearance might encourage us to align her puritanism with the Mary Whitehouses of this world, but she is more up-to-date than this. She is into Women's Lib, which propels the film into various tabloid swipes at feminism. The protestors carry banners that say 'Women's Lib: Equality or Bust' (male response – "I'll take bust every time"); they have an initiation ceremony that involves burning a bra; their second-in-command is coded as a lesbian – rare and treacherous ground for popular comedy, where dykes are conspicuous by their absence. Except, since this is a *Carry On*, she isn't a dyke, but some baffling concoction that is part Angela Brazil, part Radclyffe Hall – really contemporary references like that!

And so the plot unfolds, with regulars doing their regular turns – Bernard Bresslaw is lasciviousness plus gormlessness plus a drag scene plus a nagging girlfriend who turns out to be a steamy sexpot after all; Barbara Windsor thrusts her breasts at Sid, at us, at the world, and does her bubbly Cockney dolly-bird number; Joan Sims gets put upon. The underrated Patsy Rowlands, often the best thing in later *Carry Ons*, offers a deft performance as a wifely worm that turns (there's an intriguing tradition of these – best exemplified by the mighty Hattie Jacques in *Cabby*), and there are chase scenes and knicker jokes and bared female flesh

and Kenneth Connor loses his trousers rather too many times. Interestingly, the feminists succeed in disrupting the beauty contest (shades of the 1970 Miss World protest?), but narrative resolution, such as it is, comes in the shape of Sid and Barbara escaping on a motorbike. The closing music covers it up, but we know that Sid is still laughing that laugh.

It's an unspectacular contribution to the series, with certain evident signs of age and strain. A gratuitous hospital scene is included, complete with a Hattie Jacques lookalike matron, as if no *Carry On* was now complete without one. This is perhaps milking familiarity too far, though of course in certain other kinds of film it would be called self-referential intertextuality... Yet pleasures clearly remain – in the performances, in the innuendo (the feminists occupy a gents' toilet with a rallying cry of "we will squat in this erection"), in the familiarity of meeting old friends, in the sheer bloody ludicrousness of it all.

But isn't it horribly stereotyped? Of course it is. Attacking a *Carry On* for using stereotypes is like criticising a musical because it's unrealistic for people to burst into song like that. And in any case, along with all the others, this film is remarkably democratic in its insults – *everybody* comes in for some stick. There's the lesbian character to offend the easily offended, plus an even more unnecessary male queer wearing lavender jeans and saying "bysie-wysie" on the telephone. But heterosexuality is for the most part equally ridiculed, as is evident from the procession of randy gits, busty lovelies, old biddies and under-equipped husbands who populate the story. *Carry On Girls* offers a communal invitation to all of us, provided we're prepared to agree that every kind of sexual desire has its inherent potential to be ridiculous.

What keeps *Girls* from being a truly major contribution to the series can perhaps be summed up in six words – no Kenneth Williams or Charles Hawtrey. It's these two who always guarantee *Carry On* greatness, partly because their facial and vocal elasticities are so reliably hysterical, but more importantly because they are the real centres of sexual instability in the films. By this I don't just mean in their penchant for drag – though cross-dressing is as central to *Carrying On* as it is to Britain's other key example of transvestite family entertainment, the pantomime – but in a broader sense in which a point is reached where so many permutations of perversity are in play that any idea of the 'normal' gets lost in the dizzy delirium of it all.

This is why it's so pointless to chide the series for its lack of 'positive images', since that very phrase suggests a world of liberal fairness and bourgeois respectability that has never been on the agenda of carnival. To borrow a currently fashionable and usefully provocative term, *Carry Ons* are queer films – whatever the sexual orientations of individual characters, the overall commitment is to freewheeling anarchy, disrespectful desire and polymorphous smut. The only people we are encouraged to dislike are the people, like Augusta Prodworthy, who won't play.

It's playfulness that is the cornerstone of the

Filmography

Carry on Filming

Carry On Sergeant 1958 ***

Judged by the standards of subsequent contributions, rather tame and cosy, but its status as the unsuspecting grandparent of the series makes it worth watching, especially to see how Williams and Hawtrey hint at the delicious outrages to come.

Carry On Nurse 1959 ****

The first triumphant solidification of the formula, a seaside postcard come to life, a shameless procession of vulgarities. Utterly irresistible, with Hawtrey's bravura camp stealing the show.

Carry On Teacher 1959 **

Too much of the suspiciously soft-hearted schoolkids (hardly the subcultural rebels one might have hoped for in the late 50s), but plenty of incidental pleasures, such as Leslie Phillips' lovingly lingering pronunciation of the word 'Allcock'.

Carry On Constable 1960 ***

Sid James' first appearance should be enough recommendation; if not, then relish Williams and Hawtrey's drag routine and the general air of sticking two fingers up at 'Dixon of Dock Green'.

Carry On Regardless 1960 *

Disappointingly shapeless and lacking in bite, though Joan Sims getting drunk at a swanky wine-tasting is a scene for the compilation video.

Carry On Cruising 1962 ***

Very underrated, one of Hudis' best scripts, and offering more space than usual to the female characters. The first of the series made in colour.

Carry On Cabby 1963 *****

Originally made as 'Call Me A Cab', retitled for incorporation into the oeuvre. Its untypicality sees it verging into the forbidden zones of plausibility and rounded characterisation, making it virtually the 'kitchen sink Carry On', though drag and slapstick keep it securely within the canon. Hattie Jacques excels, the godlike Esma Cannon is beyond criticism. My own personal favourite.

Carry On Jack 1964 *

The first historical/generic parody, so important, but otherwise lame and limp. No James, Jacques, Sims, or Connor, and unforgivable swathes of Bernard Cribbins.

Carry On Spying 1964 ****

A dazzling return to form, milking every last drop from the ripe targets of espionage in general and Bond in particular. Barbara Windsor's series debut as Agent Brown Cow. One for the connoisseurs.

Carry On Cleo 1964 *****

With this and 'Spying', 1964 was probably the team's annus mirabilis. Rothwell's script is a ceaseless cascade of crudity and James and Williams were never better. Best of all, it means you never have to watch the Burton/Taylor 'Cleopatra' ever again.

Carry On Cowboy 1966 ***

More ruthless parody and carefree corn, with Hawtrey a particular delight as the Indian chief, Big Heap.

The best British Western ever made.

Carry On Screaming 1966 ***

A loving demolition of Hammer badly let down by a tedious marital subplot. Williams is superb, though, and Rothwell's puns are so tremendous they make your teeth ache.

Carry On – Don't Lose Your Head 1966 ***

Higher production values than usual, and some cherishable characterisations, notably Williams as the Robespierrien Camembert and James palpably having a whale of a time as Sir Rodney Ffing.

Carry On – Follow That Camel 1966 **

Phil Silvers stars, a long way from 'Bilko' and distressingly adrift, and this partial failure now looks like a dry run for the peerless 'Up The Khyber'.

Good names though – Fort

Zuassantneuf, Mustapha Leek.

Carry On Doctor 1968 ***

Undoubtedly plays it safe, a fairly blatant retreat of 'Nurse', but the hospital setting was always a good hunting-ground for the series. Jacques' Matron was never more awesome, and Frankie Howerd adds some fresh zest.

Carry On Up The Khyber 1968 *****

Many people's favourite, and it's not hard to see why. As Alf Garnett and Enoch Powell elsewhere sought to revive the embers of Empire, the 'Carry On' team bury it irretrievably. The penis jokes never droop and the concluding dinner-party sequence is genuinely classic. Even Roy Castle can't spoil it.

Carry On Again Doctor 1969 **

A fairly desperate title, and a disappointing film. There's too much plot, and it's too soon after 'Doctor', but Hawtrey in a pink nightdress repays repeated gobsacked viewings.

Carry On Camping 1969 ***

A definite move into pastures new, aided by borrowings from both Benny Hill-type sight gags and the gender squabbles of sitcom. Slight and sketchy, but oddly likeable and durable. This is the one where Barbara Windsor's bra finally gives out under the strain. 'Permissiveness' could no longer be ignored, to which end we are also given the unforgettable sight of James and Bresslaw briefly masquerading as hippies.

Carry On Up The Jungle 1970 **

It's a wonder they hadn't thought of trashing Tarzan before, and a pity that they didn't take enough care when they finally got around to it. Still, Howerd and James deliver moments of wonderful compensation.



Carry On Loving 1970 *

A rather strained attempt to move with the times, not so much 'Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice' as 'Sid and Hattie and Kenneth and Charles'. The dating-agency plot is the thinnest of threads on which to hang a motley old crew of nookie jokes. Not exactly bad, but radically inessential.

Carry On Henry 1971 ***

Much more like it, far richer meat for Rothwell and the regulars to chew on. Sid James' eponymous monarch is a total joy, as is the moment when the assembled company sings 'The day King Henry got his Hampton Court'. Probably the last great 'Carry On'.

Carry On At Your Convenience 1971 ***

Marred by peevish jokes about trade unionism, this neglected episode has elements of excellence – Jacques and her budge, the carnival spree of the trip to Brighton, the terrifying relentlessness of the toilet gags.

Carry On Abroad 1972 **

Another attempt to stay contemporary, though most of the humour is reassuringly familiar and the old stagers pull together professionally in the last film to include all the core cast – Hawtrey retired soon afterwards.

Carry On Matron 1972 **

One last swirl around the sluice room, with pregnancy the main comic focus (hence the splendid Bunn and Oven wards). Jacques dusts off her Matron outfit again, and Kenneth Cope does a better line in randy fecklessness than Jim Dale ever managed.

Carry On Girls 1973 **

Feminism, drag, lasciviousness and the seaside. Unexceptional but pretty paradigmatic. See main article.

Carry On Dick 1975 **

A noble attempt to recapture past parodic glories, but most of the cast are, frankly, getting a bit long in the tooth for it. Even so, some of James' laughs here are among the finest ever to emerge from that golden throat. Rothwell's final script.

Carry On Behind 1975 **

Plenty of new faces, mostly from the less interesting subsections of television sitcom, though the unexpected success is Elke Sommer as a Russian archeologist (sic). But is it only the indelible revelation of Kenneth Williams' bared backside that makes us feel the end is in sight?

Carry On England 1976 *

Oh dear, oh no, this really won't do at all. The tedious gymnastics of actual sex have replaced the rapturous labyrinths of innuendo, and Windsor Davies and Patrick Mower merely sully the memory of earlier favourites.

Carry On Emmanuelle 1978 *

It deserves an extra half-point for sheer cheek and for having Joan Sims play a character called Mrs Dangle. Otherwise, it's rather like watching endearing elderly relatives disgracing themselves at a party.

Carry On Columbus 1992

Who can say? – though Barbara Windsor and Julian Clary in the same film must surely give it the edge over the previous two. And at least it's not 'A Fish Called Wanda'.

films, and it's this quality that Hawtrey and Williams excelled at. Hawtrey's blithe disregard for normative sexual categories is best summed up by the way in which he frequently played a 24-carat nancy equipped with uncontrollable heterosexual urges, a paradox that reaches a deranged peak in *At Your Convenience*, where he is even blessed with the name of Coote (as in queer-as-a...).

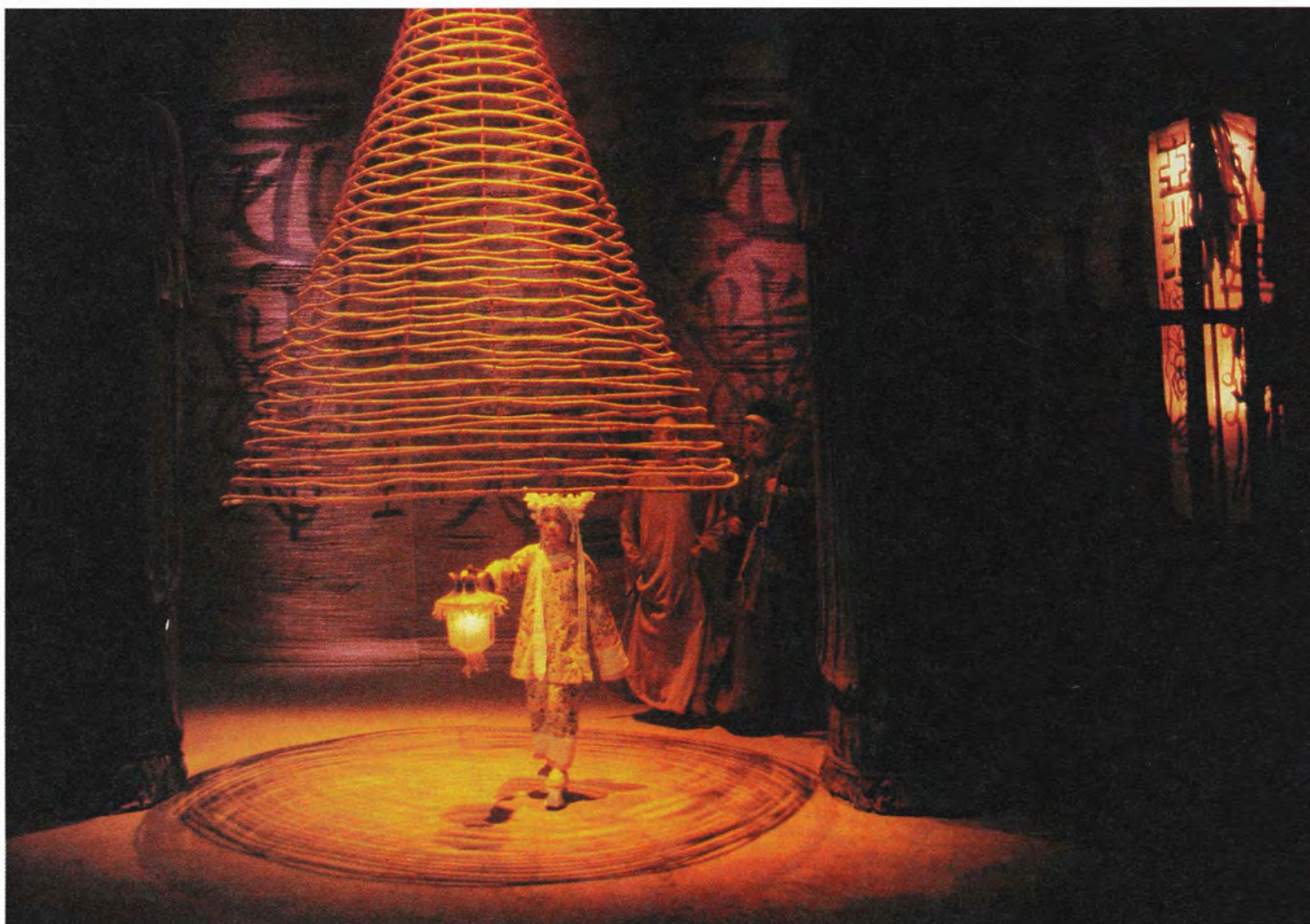
Williams also played it narratively straight but semiotically bent, at least in the Rothwell scripts. In the earlier batch, he was merely the supercilious intellectual, but as the 60s wore on, the voice grew more elaborately strangled and the nostrils flared beyond the point of human nasal probability. A contributing factor here, surely, was the impact of the radio series *Round the Horne*, in which none of Williams' gallery of voices made as much impact as his half of the gay couple Julian and Sandy, the fruitiest national icons since Carmen Miranda.

If I had to think of one reason why the *Carry Ons* matter so much, it's because they really aren't recuperable for proper culture. Like the Crazy Gang, like George Formby, like Frank Randle, they display a commitment to bodily functions and base desires that will always render them irreducibly vulgar, inescapably Not Art. (Intellectual aside: Bakhtin's distinction between the classical body of high culture and the grotesque body of carnival might be relevant here.) Art, after all, can't or won't realise that dignity, solemnity and an existential frown might not be enough to help us make sense of life.

Low comedy has consistently been culturally undervalued because those who tend to have the power of valuing are the very opposite of its target audience: they're pasty-faced, alienated, solitary bookworms who would flinch in horror from the warm, boozy, communal embrace of *Carry On* togetherness. William Wordsworth, who would, I hope, be utterly appalled to find himself cited here, famously defined the essence of poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity"; where *Carry Ons* are concerned, the only emotions that count are those that originate below the waist, and tranquillity, to paraphrase Mae West, has nothing to do with it. Here's one final example that might illustrate what I mean.

In 1975, Robin Wood published a collection of essays called *Personal Views*, which showed him caught fascinatingly on the cusp between the humanistic auteurism he had espoused and the born-again Marxist fervour that was waiting in his wings. In the book's essay on authorship, he reaches for the most telling comparison he can think of between the meaningful and the meaningless, in order to illustrate how personal authorial vision is what distinguishes between film as culturally vital medium and film as worthless trash, and he elegantly suggests how surprised we would all be if we discovered "that Robert Bresson came secretly to England to make *Carry On Nurse* under the pseudonym of Gerald Thomas".

Too right, Robin. When did you last see that boring Bresson down at the karaoke bar on Brighton pier?



HARD BOILED

Tony Rayns writes from Hong Kong, where the schedules are short, satire is king, 1997 looms and the Film Festival fights a good fight

● Tsui Hark finished shooting *Once Upon a Time in China 2* on the afternoon of Monday 6 April. The next day I had lunch with Zhang Tielin, who guest-stars in the movie as the young Dr Sun Yat-Sen. Zhang told me that they'd worked continuously for the last thirty-six hours of the shoot, often amid crew members trying to snatch odd minutes of sleep on the studio floor. Zhang had to leave Hong Kong for Taiwan on the Wednesday, so his part would be dubbed by another actor.

On Saturday night of the same week, I was at Ocean Theatre in Tsimshatsui for the midnight preview of the finished film – which turned out, incidentally, to be Tsui's best in some time. Tsui himself didn't show up to gauge audience reaction (presumably he was asleep), but his wife Shi Nan-Sun told me that he'd been making small revisions to the show print right up to 7.30 that evening. A team of cutters had been sent around the city to make

the same changes to the other preview prints.

Those people in other countries who are blown away by the amyl-charged pacing of Hong Kong movies don't know the half of it. The rush to get *Once Upon a Time in China 2* (*Huang Feihong zhi Er: Nan'r Dang Zi Qiang*) finished and into release was exceptional, but not very. A fortnight from the close of shooting to the premiere is quite usual, and it nowadays yields movies with a technical polish to match their generally high production values. Tsui's film, of course, had been edited as it was shot, and the music score and publicity materials had been readied well in advance; but Tsui cut things fine by leaving himself only five days to finish the editing, dub the dialogue (in Cantonese and Mandarin versions), mix the sound, finalise the Chinese and English subtitles and make the release prints. There are two reasons why Hong Kong movies are routinely rushed into distribution this way. First, it helps thwart video piracy, espe-



cially in Taiwan. Second, the local audience has a limitless appetite for novelty, and films (if they're going to work at all) tend to sell themselves – so there's no real need for substantial pre-release publicity.

The two *Once Upon a Time in China* movies conform precisely to the world's image of Hong Kong cinema (glamorous staging and haircuts, slapstick comedy integrated with brilliantly choreographed action scenes, energy level off the scale), but that's because Tsui Hark's films did most to foster that image in the first place. Like most of Tsui's output since 1986, these two movies are supercharged remakes/revisions of the heroic fantasies he loved as a kid: they revive the late-nineteenth-century hero Huang Feihong (or, in Cantonese, Wong Fei-Hung), whose heavily fictionalised exploits were celebrated in a long series of Cantonese quickies between 1949 and 1970. Tsui is also reviving the career of his lead actor Li Lianjie ('Jet Li'), a China-born

martial arts champion who had some short-lived success in kung-fu movies a decade ago.

In Tsui's version, Huang Feihong becomes a cypher for Chinese bafflement in the face of western incursions into China. The first film finds him battling British colonialist bullies and slave traders and their Chinese lackeys, all the while struggling to keep up with the westernised manners of a sophisticated lady friend (played by Rosamund Kwan). The second gets more mileage out of the troublesome lady friend, but otherwise reverses the balance: the British consulate in Guangzhou becomes the last safe haven in a China gripped by hysterical and dangerous nationalism. The baddies this time are the fanatics of the White Lotus Clan (one of the mystical 'Boxer' sects who rose up against the allied imperial powers in 1900) and the dishonest local officials who shield them.

Both films are crammed with vignettes and one-liners designed to evoke more up-to-date

aspects of the East/West divide, but the new film is also the closest Tsui has come to an analysis of 'what's wrong with China' since his early allegorical feature *We're Going to Eat You* (*Diyu Wu Men*, 1980 – literally 'No Exit from Hell'), a black comedy about a community of cannibals. His main point of reference this time is Mao's Cultural Revolution of the mid-60s: the power-hungry leaders of the White Lotus Clan trick their followers as Mao and the Gang of Four tricked theirs, and the clan disciples run wild in the streets like rampaging Red Guards. The comparisons are too flip and facetious to amount to serious political comment, but the Hong Kong audience is quick to pick up the resonances.

None of this is surprising, since almost all Hong Kong movies of the last ten years have referred directly or indirectly to the '1997 issue' – China's looming resumption of sovereignty over the territory – most of them frivolously. Ann Hui opened up the ground in her *Boat* ►



Hong Kong hits:
Chow Yun-Fat, above, takes aim in John Woo's 'Hard-Boiled' against a gang boss who stores his munitions in a hospital, left
Top left: Tsui Hark's 'Once Upon a Time in China 2' draws parallels between the mystical rites of the turn-of-the-century White Lotus Clan and the Maoist mystique of the Cultural Revolution of the 60s

◀ *People* (Touben Nuhai, 1982), which used the Communist takeover of Danang in South Vietnam as a vivid metaphor for Hong Kong's potential fate at the hands of China. Since then, dozens of movies have explored the factors that divide or unite Hong Kong and China, often by transplanting Hong Kong characters to China or vice versa. There have also been plenty of movies that look back to turbulent periods in China's modern history to find analogies for present-day insecurities, and many that centre on the middle-class rush to emigrate from Hong Kong. Not surprisingly, the 4 June massacre in Beijing prompted quick reactions: there was a marked escalation in the incidence of violent deaths in movies generally, and the villains in the gangster movies of 1990 tended to have the name 'Li Peng'. *Once Upon a Time in China 2* is one of several films that express doubts about China's political competence and stability.

The Sino-British Agreement on the transfer of sovereignty guarantees Hong Kong fifty more years of entrepreneurial capitalism after 1997. Deng Xiaoping's formula to cover this 'anomaly' is "One Country, Two Systems". Hong Kong columnists have taken to parodying this as "One Country, 14 Systems", noting that China hasn't yet managed to come up with officials or bureaucrats capable of grasping the way that Hong Kong works, and fearing that press freedom will be the first thing to go when the motherland re-embraces its lost child. There's no doubt that many Hong Kong people feel very strongly about these matters: the 40 per cent of them who voted in last September's first direct elections to the governing Legislative Council returned a solid phalanx of pro-democracy, anti-Beijing liberals, and thousands still turn out for candlelit vigils in Victoria Park to mark the anniversaries of the 4 June massacre. My sense, though, is that the majority (including the two million who didn't vote last year) view the whole China question with a mixture of healthy cynicism and weary resignation.

It's the same in the movies. *Boat People* was a box-office hit ten years ago, but no serious-minded film since has managed to capture the mass audience by asking pointed questions about Hong Kong, China and their respective futures. Tsui Hark was the only 'new wave' director of the late 70s to take this lesson to heart. His third feature, *Dangerous Encounter – 1st Kind* (*Di Yi Leixing Weixian*, 1980, aka *Don't Play With Fire*), was a minatory dream of social breakdown and violence, starting from an 'unholy' alliance of anarchic middle- and working-class kids, and ending with murderous battles between kids, triad gangsters and vicious foreigners. I've always

'Hard-Boiled' may be the first genre movie to take its tone and structure from a cocktail

thought this by far Tsui's best film, but very few people have ever seen it: the original version was banned in Hong Kong, and a partially reshot version with altered motivations and a much more prominent role for the police was a box-office disaster. That flop changed the course of Tsui's career. He abandoned 'personal' filmmaking and switched to 'family entertainment' – which in his case meant farcical action comedies embellished with Hollywood-style special effects and ever more spectacular set-piece stunts. At the same time, his social and political jibes were reconstructed as throwaway gags.

The Hong Kong movies that reach festivals around the world – most of them from Tsui Hark's Film Workshop or Jackie Chan's Golden Way Films – are far from typical of the industry as a whole. Hong Kong's reigning superstar is the comedian Stephen Chiau, who specialises in improvised wisecracks and absurdist non-sequiturs and respects nothing, the 1997 issue included. Because of his incredible success in low-budget genre parodies (eight of them in 1990 alone, six more in 1991, plus an appearance in *The Banquet*, the industry's benefit movie for flood victims in China), Chiau is now being groomed to star in more polished (read: exportable) movies. Right now, his appeal is more or less limited to Cantonese speakers, since his jokes defeat subtitling and lose much of their punch when dubbed into Mandarin. But his vehicles already massively outgross anything by Tsui Hark or Jackie Chan, which proves to the rest of the industry that it's not necessary to spend money on anything but the star to make a fortune; not on scripts, not on professional production management, least of all on sophisticated post-production. This, of course, makes everything harder for directors who are ambitious to make world-class films.

Take John Woo, for example. Chiefly interested in questions of male-bonding, rivalry and betrayal, he has done more than anyone to make the gangster thriller a dominant genre in Hong Kong cinema. The huge success of his comeback film, *A Better Tomorrow* (*Yingxiong Bense*, 1986, made after a couple of years in the doldrums in Taiwan), set twin fashions for male hysteria and staggeringly hyperbolic shoot-outs that are still not quite played out, although the genre's centre of gravity has now shifted to outsize bio-pics

based on the lives of well-known gangsters and corrupt cops. Woo has meanwhile gone his own auteurist way, devising ever more plangent variations on his lone killers, tortured undercover men and soulful cops. *The Killer* (*Diexue Shuang Xiong*, 1989), conceived as a homage to Scorsese and Jean-Pierre Melville, attracted enough critical attention in the US to get him noticed by Universal, for whom he's currently preparing to shoot a Jean-Claude Van Damme vehicle. But he has become too much of a heavyweight for the tastes of the Hong Kong audience. His latest, *Hard-Boiled* (*Lashou Shentan*), competed with the Stephen Chiau movie *Fight Back to School 2* and *Once Upon a Time in China 2* on release... and came in third.

Hard-Boiled is actually Woo's most relaxed and confident film so far, and in many ways a terrific achievement. It offers nothing much new in plot terms except for the idea of setting the climactic shoot-out in a busy hospital with a hidden arms cache in its basement, but its details and incidentals are gleefully idiosyncratic and the visual style is a fine mix of bluesy realism and jazzy kinetics. This may be the first genre movie to take its tone and structure from a cocktail. Tequila pop is second only to XO cognac as a headbanger of preference in Hong Kong film circles; it involves mixing a large measure of tequila with a small measure of 7-Up in a thick-bottomed whiskey glass, covering the top with a napkin and slamming the glass down on the bar to make the mixture explode. Inspector Yuen (Chow Yun-Fat, Woo's favourite actor) knocks back his first tequila pop under the credits of *Hard-Boiled* before we even know that 'Tequila' is his nickname, and goes on to blow after-hours clarinet in a jazz club where the barman, his old friend and soul mate, is played by John Woo. The movie is an extended riff on the drink: a placid surface easily shaken into violent animation, wildly exciting climaxes that leave the characters with terminal hangovers.

The only Hong Kong director who refuses to think in genre terms and nonetheless keeps working is Stanley Kwan. Even more amazing, Kwan persuaded the major Golden Harvest to underwrite a full year of research in preparation for his latest film, *Actress* (*Ruan Lingyu*), which reconstructs the last six years in the troubled life of Shanghai's foremost silent-movie star. Ruan Lingyu (1910-1935) moved from playing assertive mistresses and other loose women in routine melodramas to starring in a string of outstanding 'progressive' movies that took feminist arguments several stages beyond Ibsen; she was driven to suicide at the age of twenty-five by a campaign of vilification in the gutter press.

But Kwan's film is less a conventional bio-pic than a rhapsodic collage of historical evidence, dramatised reconstruction, documentary and speculative fiction. It integrates clips from Ruan's six surviving films and interviews with veterans who knew or worked with her; and it penetrates the chasm between the Shanghai film industry of the 30s and the Hong Kong film industry of the 90s by showing Kwan's own discussions with his leading actors about their interpretations of past events and characters. Perhaps it's because Maggie Cheung recognises parallels between Ruan's situation in the early 30s and her own in present-day Hong Kong that she delivers such a spirited and sympathetic performance in the lead.

As much as anything else, *Actress* is about a group of cynical, callow and generally under-informed Hong Kong film people falling under the spell of their more idealistic, committed and motivated forerunners of the 30s. A similar contrast between past and present underpins *Rouge* (Yanzhi Kou, 1987), the best-known of Kwan's earlier films, but *Actress* goes deeper into the gains and losses of 'progress'. This is the first Chinese movie made anywhere that tries to come to terms with China's 'lost' film heritage, and anyone who knows the field recognises very quickly that Kwan offers a perspective very different from the one found in China's official histories of the period. Nothing is more touching, for example, than the film's respect and affection for the late Fei Mu, reviled by the Communists as a 'Rightist', but surely one of the greatest directors of his time. In a sense, *Actress* is a 'post-1997' film in that it presumes underlying continuities in Chinese culture; but it's also a



Shanghai gestures:
the ubiquitous Maggie Cheung plays the tragic Ruan Lingyu (who was a fan of Dietrich) in Stanley Kwan's *'Actress'*, a reconstruction of the last six years in the life of Shanghai's foremost silent-movie star and a pioneering attempt to come to terms with China's 'lost' film heritage

'pre-1997' film in that it asserts Hong Kong's right not to follow the mainland's Party lines.

Stanley Kwan has since finished a fifteen-minute short called *Too Happy For Words* (*Liang ge Nuren, Yi ge Liang Yi ge N'liang*) from a script by Hong Kong's leading gay-culture activist, Edward Lam. It tackles the Cukor-esque subject of a social clash between women of two generations, and has them played by stars of two generations, the semi-retired Josephine Siu and the ubiquitous Maggie Cheung. It lives up to its English title by virtually dispensing with dialogue, preferring to work through music, dance and stylised action. The result is extremely mysterious, but it confirms (whatever else) that Kwan is moving further and further away from the norms of the Hong Kong film industry. It's impossible to say what this implies for his future, but he already has projects lined up with mainland star Gong Li and German producer Regina Ziegler.

Kwan premiered *Too Happy For Words* alongside the longer, 'international' version of *Actress* at this year's Hong Kong International Film Festival, which maintained its status as the best-programmed and most innovative film event in East Asia. The festival's strength has always been its willingness to test the limits of the permissible in Hong Kong and to embroil itself in current controversies in Chinese film culture. This year, for example, it succeeded in aggravating the pro-Beijing press by screening *Compassion in Exile*, Michael Lemle's excellent documentary about the totalitarian oppression of Tibet; it also riled the Film Bureau in Beijing by planning to screen the Chinese television series *Tiananmen Square*, which had to be pulled from the programme at the last minute. At the other extreme, the festival stumbled into the realms of dubiously nationalist rhetoric by publishing a fatuous and long-winded defence of Bruce Lee (phrased as an attack on various unnamed "western critics" and "gay critics") in the catalogue accompanying its retrospective. The festival catalogues, incidentally, used to perform an invaluable service by translating the writings of Chinese critics into English, thereby making them available to the rest of the world. But the catalogues for this and last year's retrospectives are divided into discrete Chinese and English sections and little or nothing is translated in either direction. This seems a sad retreat from earlier policies.

The festival screenings meanwhile faithfully reflected the diversity of film-making in Hong Kong/China/Taiwan. *Ripples Across Stagnant Water* (*Kuang*), by the seventy-five-year-old Ling Zifeng, is a fresh and sensual tale of adultery in turn-of-

the-century Sichuan which echoes Tsui Hark in suggesting parallels between the Boxer Rebellion and the Cultural Revolution. Ling has been directing adaptations of his favourite novels of the 30s ever since history relieved him of the obligation to direct Communist propaganda movies, and this film is based on a 1935 novel by Li Jieren; it gets tangled up in its own profusion of narrative threads towards the end, but most of it seems as 'young' as anything by Leos Carax. Edward Yang turned up to introduce the full-length (four-hour) version of his *A Brighter Summer Day* (*Guling Jie Shaonian Sha Ren Shijian*), which sets its characters more clearly in their social context than the shorter version does and thus makes clearer the links between the central murder incident and the paranoid political climate of 1960 Taiwan. And the festival retrieved from the vaults the unreleased 1987 film *King of Chess* (*Qi Wang*), begun by Yim Ho and commandeered by its producer, Tsui Hark. Yim's original idea was to counterpoint two stories, one set in China during the Cultural Revolution, the other in present-day Taiwan, and the film respects this by having its central character, a journalist based in Taipei, recall episodes from his childhood in China. But it's hard to believe that Yim (who told me that he hasn't seen the finished film) would be satisfied with either the crassness of the satire of Taiwanese materialism or the flabbiness of the satire of Chinese 'ultra-leftism', which consists of little more than playing loud rock music by Luo Dayou over newsreel images of Maoist fervour from the 60s. The film is an aesthetic disaster, but interesting as evidence of Hong Kong's submerged desire to engage with political issues.

Thanks to the festival's long-term campaigning, the Hong Kong Urban Council has at last announced plans to found a Film Archive, to preserve whatever vestiges of the territory's own film heritage still survive. The festival celebrated this overdue commitment by mounting a series of archival screenings, which threw up at least one priceless find: the 1929 Ozu comedy *A Straightforward Boy* (*Tokkan-kozo*), which has long been considered lost. The print was discovered in the hands of a private collector in Japan, and it isn't yet preserved in the National Film Center in Tokyo. It turned out to be an example of Ozu at his closest to Hollywood (it derives from an O'Henry story) – a story of a kidnapped boy so exasperating his captors that they release him, told with few of Ozu's distinctive tropes. It is, however, genuinely funny and contains some excellent work with members of Ozu's 'stock company'. He reputedly made it in four days, which makes even Tsui Hark look relaxed.

The great films of the twentieth-century city are often, paradoxically, studio-made features, argues Peter Wollen, as he reflects on a tradition stretching from 'Metropolis' and 'King Kong' to 'Blade Runner' and 'Batman Returns'

DELIRIOUS PROJECTIONS

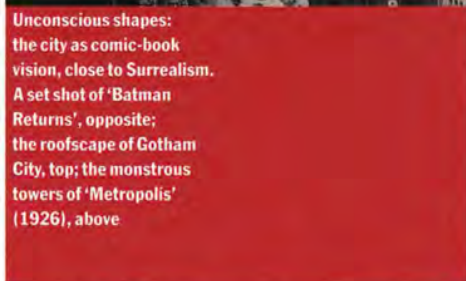


● Last year, while I was in a Moscow archive viewing some hitherto unshown Soviet films from the 20s, I was joined from time to time by a French visitor who watched only films set in Moscow. It turned out that he ran the film and video section of the Museum of the City of Paris, which collected and showed films only in terms of their portrayal of cities. His long-term project was to build up a library on disc which would allow viewers to find all the moving images made of any given street in Paris in any given year. Ultimately, a global dream archive would cover all the major cities of the world. Thus there would be a comprehensive inventory of every street in every city in every year. Hence his interest in Boris Barnet's *The House on Trubnaia Square*.

I was reminded of how, when I first visited San Francisco, I went on the *Vertigo* tour, visiting all the locations of Hitchcock's film, most of which (except, for example, the MacKittrick Hotel) still exist, although the Mission at San Juan Bautista, where the climactic scenes take place, was something of a shock, since, although it had a wooden horse in the stable, it did not have a bell tower – provided in the film by a glass painting. Some films, like *Vertigo*, give us a particularly vivid image of their chosen city. Indeed, in the 20s, there was even a mini-genre of the avant-garde documentary 'city film' – Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler's *Manhatta*, Alberto Cavalcanti's *Rien que les heures*, Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: A Metropolitan Symphony* and, the culmination of the form, Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, although this presents us, through 'creative geography', with a kind of 'compilation city', made up of cities in the Ukraine as well as parts of Moscow.

Recently, seeing Tim Burton's *Batman Returns*, I was reminded that the cinematic city is not necessarily a simple montage of real locations. It can also be an art director's dream city – an artificial construction created in the studio for a specific purpose. The Gotham of *Batman Returns* gives us an image of New York which is just as telling as that of *Manhatta* or Woody Allen's *Manhattan* or Jules Dassin and Mark Hellinger's *The Naked City* or Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly's *On the Town* or Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets* or Terry Gilliam's *The Fisher King*, to take some classic examples of the New York location picture. *Batman Returns* is part of a rival tradition – that of *Just Imagine*, *King Kong*, and *Dead End* – the tradition of the New York studio picture, that arguably begins with Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, which Lang was inspired to make after his own visit to New York with Erich Pommer in 1924.

The history of film coincides almost exactly with the history of the skyscraper, both beginning in the 1890s, then attaining the grand scale with the Woolworth building in 1913 and *Birth of a Nation* in 1915 and eventually being consolidated during the early 30s, the 'classic' age of the New York skyscraper and the period in which the Hollywood studio system was solidly established. There is, however, what André Bazin would have called an 'ontological' contradiction between film and skyscraper: one is essentially a horizontal form, the other essentially vertical. One depends for its mobil-



Unconscious shapes: the city as comic-book vision, close to Surrealism. A set shot of 'Batman Returns', opposite; the roofscape of Gotham City, top; the monstrous towers of 'Metropolis' (1926), above

ity on the tracking shot, the other on the elevator. It is for this reason, I believe, that the great films of the twentieth-century city are often, paradoxically, studio-made films, triumphs of design rather than realistic photographic renderings of the mean streets themselves. The studio, a world of miniatures and models and *trompe l'oeil* effects, allows the film-maker the luxury of creating, through camera angle and spatial condensation, a filmic city which is vertical – not only spatially, but also, of course, metaphorically.

There is another reason why the city film is so often a studio film, however. The city is perceived as a kind of dream space, a delirious world of psychic projection rather than sociological delineation. In his classic book, *Delirious New York*, Rem Koolhaas sees New York, the ultimate modern city of the twentieth century, as a triumph, not of the rationalist grid that apparently constitutes it, but of delirious unconscious desires, symbolised from the start in the archetypal dreamland of Coney Island. Urban fears and fantasies surface in the weird architectural visions that are constantly being strait-jacketed by order and good sense, yet constantly break through to leave behind a residue of madness that gives the city its potency and charm. According to Koolhaas, Le Corbusier ultimately failed to impose his will on the twentieth-century city. André Breton's Surrealist *Nadja* was nearer the mark.

The cinematic vision of the city which leaves the most lasting impression is really a cartoon and comic-book vision. It is the vision of *Batman Returns*, of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, of *Brazil*, of

Blade Runner – and before that of *Metropolis* and *King Kong*. These films betray their fascination with the architecture of the modern city, but they are closer to Expressionism and Surrealism than to Constructivism and Rationalism. They are dystopian rather than utopian. The cinematic city is nearer to the Futurist visions of Sant'Elia, where outside elevators crawl up the sides of vast megastructures, as in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, than to any built city. And where filmic cities do not have direct cartoon or comic-book inspiration they draw on popular illustration – as with *Blade Runner*'s debt to Sentinel and Mobius comics.

In many cases these films borrow directly from the never-realised visions of 20s architectural illustrators. Thus the Gotham of *Batman Returns* is modelled on Hugh Ferriss' vistas of an imaginary Manhattan and Harvey Wiley Corbett's schemes for a city of multilevel arcades joined by bridges spanning the void between urban cliffs. Ferriss' charcoal drawings show massive, empty, looming buildings, vast, misty and sublime. Corbett adds streams of speeding cars and congested sidewalks. *Batman Returns* centres its city on a monstrous Ferriss-style rendering of the Rockefeller Center, adorned by massive caricatures of Paul Manship and Gaston Lachaise's heroic modern sculptures, whose pretensions to being the classical *agora* of the metropolis are reduced to the kitschy glitter of ice rink and Christmas tree. Similarly, the central megastructure in *Blade Runner* is in the neo-Mayan style heralded in the 20s in Los Angeles by Robert Stacy-Judd and Francisco Mujica. In reality, Stacy-Judd and Mujica built very little (the former's major work was the Aztec Hotel in Monrovia), but their grandiose visions were realised in the cinema. *Blade Runner* also reuses the neo-Mayan textile blocks designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for his series of three Los Angeles houses, in an explicit tribute to the 20s Mayan revival which Wright promoted.

The illustrators and architects of the 20s imagined that they were creating a new urban utopia, that their progressive vision was appropriate to their new twentieth-century America. In the cinematic versions, this utopia has now become darkened and corrupted. *Blade Runner*'s Los Angeles is closer to Mike Davis' noir *City of Quartz*, almost a displaced ruin of the rust-belt, than it is to Reyner Banham's Los Angeles of beaches and sunshine or David Hockney's pale-blue swimming-pools. Indeed, many of these films draw directly on the tradition of *film noir*. The cruel neo-expressionist world of Robert Siodmak is recreated in a loony-tune or science-fantasy garb. Just as Orson Welles drew on the Sleepy Lagoon frame-up of Mexican-American *pachucos* (on whose Defence Committee he served) for his noir *Touch of Evil*, so *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* draws on the destruction of the old Los Angeles public transit system (the Big Red Cars) and the traditional Mexican-American section of downtown Los Angeles to make room for new freeways and new construction. The dystopian turn is given direction by pointed historical allusion and political metaphor.

Indeed, these films often seem politically premonitory. *Batman Returns* uncannily predicts the atmosphere of the Los Angeles riots, ►

BETHEL POSTERS AND DESIGNS

◀ with its scenario of an image-conscious public-relations-driven political campaign full of the rhetoric of "urban chaos", of a "community coming apart" and the need for a "time of healing", while rioters shout "Burn, baby, burn!" The slogan comes from the Watts riots of the 60s, but in Burton's film it re-echoes, as though we are living through *Watts Returns*, the sequel. As in *Metropolis*, the vertical space of the modern (or now post-modern) city is also a class space, with a rebellious underclass literally living underground, emerging from time to time to riot and bring terror to the aboveground citizenry, while the future of the city is plotted to their own crooked advantage by tycoons and politicians in skyscraper penthouses.

Bewitching robots

Blade Runner too can be seen in terms of contemporary Los Angeles, evoked in its opening shots modelled on the view across the flatlands from San Pedro, a city in which 'white flight' has left a ramshackle downtown to a throng of Third World immigrants and intellectual misfits, presided over by a single, giant high-security corporate headquarters, while the middle class has fled to 'off-world', a kind of interplanetary Simi Valley. Meanwhile cops ruthlessly hunt down runaway slaves and kill them in public view. Similarly, we might see *Batman Returns* as the second panel of a Tim Burton diptych, depicting the farce of the inner city, as its predecessor, *Edward Scissorhands*, depicted the tragedy of the suburbs. In *Edward Scissorhands*, the deformed outsider is well intentioned but misunderstood and finally driven out to build his ice palaces; in *Batman Returns*, he is ill intentioned, well understood and finally destroyed (and his ice palace with him).

It is often argued that films like *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *Blade Runner* and *Batman Returns* are post-modern. They mix genres, they recycle old films, they depict a world without an established hierarchy of truth. But if they are post-modern, it is not simply because they present an unreal world of simulation and citation. It is because they portray the post-modern politics of the post-modern city with an eerie accuracy, all the more striking for the abandonment of any stylistic 'realism'. They show the urban outcome of the collapse of Fordism, the end of mass production yoked to mass consumption by Keynesian policies of full employment, unionised labour, social welfare programme and consensus politics. They depict the post-Fordist city of de-industrialisation, casual and freelance employment, large-scale immigration, the privatisation of welfare and social polarisation. It is nonetheless recognisable for being represented through toons or replicants or penguins.

Critics of the modern city saw it as a heartless environment, in which a cold, analytical reason threatened to impose itself on the people, suppressing individuality and emotion. This is the theme of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and it is recapitulated in cruder terms in George Orwell's 1984. The same critique is latent in David Butler's *Just Imagine*, the first science-fiction musical, set in a futuristic version of New York, full of automats and incubators and

meals reduced to tablets, and it lasts at least until Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*, which finds 1984 on location in contemporary Paris. But the post-modern critique of the modern city is different. Here, the city is no longer seen as a rational space or would-be progressive environment. On the contrary, it is a madhouse. It is a chaos – hybrid, retro-fitted and violent.

As Sharon Zukin points out in her absorbing book on contemporary New York, *Loft Living*, the de-industrialisation of the city was accompanied by a rediscovery of the joys of freight elevators and industrial junk. Artists became fascinated by recycling Canal Street junk and *objets trouvés* in their work, just as they began moving their homes into disused factory spaces and launching loft-living on its career as post-industrial chic. At the same time, de-industrialisation led to chronic unemployment, mitigated only by low-wage jobs for immigrants. As Zukin points out, the economic, social and artistic trends interlocked. And it is precisely this new junk-store, recycling, on-the-edge aesthetic which finally infiltrated Hollywood and helped to create the imagery of the post-modern city. Fluxus, the urban New York art movement that Zukin pinpoints, was more important, I would argue, than the much more publicised world views of computer freaks and simulation buffs.

The rediscovery of *Metropolis* was also, of course, crucial to the new city film. Its influence was widespread, beginning with the re-issue of the Giorgio Moroder soundtrack and culminating in one of Madonna's best videos. With *Metropolis* came a renewed interest in Expressionism proper, reinforcing the neo-expressionist influence which stemmed from *noir*. *Metropolis* provided a strong iconic vocabulary of bewitching robots, troglodytes in catacombs, mass hysteria in the streets, gilded youth in ornate pleasure palaces, corporate tycoons in downtown skyscrapers – all motifs which reappear in recent city films. At the same time, directors like Burton (and his designer of choice, Bo Welch) reintroduce elaborate expressionist sets into their films. The pop-surrealist crazy house of *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* leads on to the expressionist underworld of *Beetlejuice*, which is then recapitulated in the Penguin's lair in *Batman Returns*. In this last film, the villainous tycoon is even named Max Schreck, in direct homage to the actor who played the vampire count in F. W. Murnau's classic *Nosferatu*.

But these films draw on sources going back far beyond Expressionism. *Blade Runner*, for example, draws on Hogarth's depictions of eighteenth-century London. The return to Expressionism often seems only a retro-fitted way-station on the long path back to medievalism. This is most obvious in Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*, where post-modern architecture, such as Ricardo Bofill's housing complex at Marne-la-Vallée, is shown alongside Leighton House and the National Liberal Club, and *Mad* magazine jostles with Kafka and Bosch. In Gilliam's *The Fisher King*, the medievalism is even more direct, carried in the imagery of the Grail legend itself. But medievalism is also there in the thronged alleys of *Blade Runner*, alongside the

personal flying machines, the giant advertising screens and the artificial snakes. In *Batman Returns*, the freaks and stunt people of the Red Triangle Circus, who surround the Penguin, are also figures from the medieval realm of carnival, ominous portents of a world turned upside down. The city crammed full of revellers is strangely reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe's *Masque of the Red Death*, caught in the last crazy act before the finale, in which the only hope of rescue comes from a grim-visaged medieval knight.

In the 30s, Ernest Shoedsack and Merian Cooper's *King Kong* depicted the giant ape, forcibly brought to the city, manacled and persecuted, as finally driven to destroy the city in frustration at his thwarted love. With its sympathy for the outsider and the victim, it was a favourite film of the Surrealists. It still remains the most powerful and popular evocation of modern New York produced by Hollywood. Its closing images of King Kong clutching helplessly at the zeppelin pylon of the Empire State building have become almost a symbol of the city. *Blade Runner* has the ambition to work in a similar way, but for post-modern Los Angeles, half a century later. The replicant anti-hero, Roy Batty, is finally martyred, a Miltonic rebel angel, who dies in a complex of Christian imagery, bearing the stigmata, releasing a dove. Again, the spectator's sympathy has switched from the blade runner to the replicant, as it switched from the captor to the captive in *King Kong*.

The rotten and the lofty

It is often argued that socially relevant and politically critical films should be realist in their style, showing the world as it 'really' is. But if we look at some recent films depicting London, whether Stephen Frears' *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* or Derek Jarman's *The Last of England* or Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* or Gilliam's *Brazil* (the London dimension of it, at any rate), we see that they are far from realist in their approach, although their anti-Thatcherite accuracy is perfectly clear. The same is true when we look at films about New York or Los Angeles. The ones that are most telling are closer to cartoon comedy and science fiction than they are to the traditional genres of social conscience and reform. It is as though the polarisation and disorder of society has led to a situation where melodrama, with its lurid polarities of innocence and evil, or the grotesque, with its juxtaposition of the rotten with the lofty, are more representative of the city in a post-modern age than they have been for decades. As we leave behind the values of the Keynesian welfare state, we find the need for a new aesthetic which surfaces, like the Penguin and his gang, in startling and unexpected ways.

In the last analysis, the crass hyperbole and devoted weirdness of *Batman Returns* may have more to tell us about the contemporary American city than any number of the platitudes about communities coming apart and the need for healing which the film ruthlessly parodies. *'Batman Returns' opened on 10 July and is reviewed on page 48 of this issue*



Studio vistas: Hugh Ferriss' 20s imaginings of Manhattan, a place of dreams and fears, which greatly influenced filmmakers, far left; the ape, in a new kind of jungle, in 'King Kong' (1933), the most famous Hollywood vision of New York, left

Giddy heights and rotten depths: the thronged alleys of 'Blade Runner' (1982), which owe something to a retro-medievalism, right; the dreaming towers, below, a central element of Scott's vision of a dystopian future and so much more potent an image of the contemporary city than any realist film



BRI STILL, POSTERS AND DESIGNS (2)

RONALD GRANT

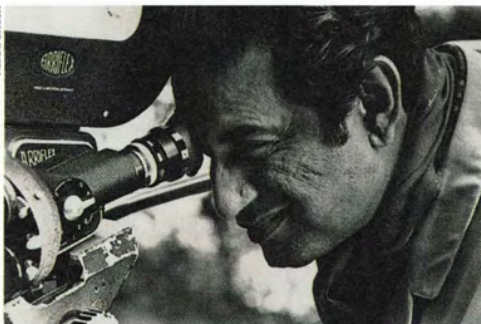
SATYAJIT

RAY

From 'Pather Panchali' to 'The Chess Players' and beyond, the films of Satyajit Ray have excited both admiration and argument.

As a tribute to the film-maker, who died earlier this year in Calcutta, 'Sight and Sound' invited figures from three generations to write about the man and his achievement

NEMAI GHOSH



Great expectations:
'Pather Panchali',
a film engaged and at
times exhilarated
by the sounds and sights
of the future, below
Left: Satyajit Ray at work



KOMAL

Memories of Ray

Saeed Jaffrey, who starred in 'The Chess Players', remembers the film and its director

I discovered the art of Satyajit Ray – or 'Manikda' (brother jewel), as I was affectionately to call him – in 1956, on the eve of my departure from India for points West. In 1956, at the Regal cinema in New Delhi, on a Sunday morning, I saw his very first film, *Pather Panchali*. So moved was I by its visual lyricism, its truth and its beauty, that I literally wept with joy. Images of young Apu discovering the moving train or the humming sound of telegraph wires; the fragile and doddering old grandmother calling out to the children; young Durga dancing in ecstasy when the first Monsoon shower drenches her hair, or the air of premonition with which she tells one of her girlfriends that she will never get married "amaar shaadi toe, hobay-ee na" – these moments haunted me for years and have remained indelible. Silently, I prayed to my God to let me work with this great director whenever I did my first Indian film in an Indian language. This wish was granted, twenty years later, with *The Chess Players*. The language was Urdu, my mother tongue, and the characters, the Nawabs, were part of my ancestry. And it was my first Indian film.

I left India in 1956, caught up with Madhur, my first wife, at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, then moved on to Washington DC to do a Master's degree in drama. Throughout my nine years' stay in the US, mainly, and fortunately, in New York, I would always find the little art cinemas where Ray's films were playing. The Apu trilogy, *The Music Room*, *Days and Nights in the Forest*, *The Goddess...* I saw all his films in New York. There, too, I met James Ivory when he came to see me in Lorca's *Blood Wedding* at the Actors Playhouse, Off Broadway. Madhur and I also met Ismail Merchant, who was studying at Columbia University, and we were later to invite them together to our cosy Riverside Drive apartment. Within a week, Merchant Ivory Productions was formed. Manikda had not only inspired them, but also wrote the music and helped to edit one of their early films.

I didn't meet Manikda until November 1972. It was at Beirut airport. We were both travelling from London to Delhi; he was probably returning from the London Film Festival and I was on my way to join the French film director François Villiers, to play Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the last great 'Roi de Punjab', in his six-hour French television film *Le Soleil se lève à l'est*. The plane stopped at Beirut, which was not the strife-torn city it is today, but still the 'Paris of the Middle East'. And, there, as large as life, was this magnificent, handsome, gigantic figure of my favourite film director. I couldn't resist going up to him and nervously introducing myself. I was stunned when, in his lovely, warm, basso profundo voice, he said, "I know you; you are Saeed Jaffrey. You used to be married to Madhur. I saw you in Jim Ivory's *The Guru*. You played Murad and you were by far the best thing in it. I also listen a lot to the BBC World Service and I've heard you reading

some wonderful short stories in English, and Wajid Ali Shah's letters to his Begum, in Urdu". "Is there a chance that we might work together in the future, sir?", I asked; to which he replied, "I also know you are a patient man, very good at waiting. So please wait, it just might happen".

And happen it did, in the most dramatic fashion. On 8 January 1976, almost as a birthday present, I received a letter from him in London. Written in his beautiful calligraphic handwriting, it went something like this: "My dear Saeed, Jim and Ismail might already have informed you, but yes, it is true that I have decided to make my first non-Bengali film. It will be based on an Urdu short story you must be familiar with [and I was], Munshi Premchand's *Shatranj ke Khilari* (*The Chess Players*). You will play Meer. A Bombay actor called Sanjeev Kumar will play the other chess player, Mirza..." The letter went on to say how difficult it was to portray an obsession like chess, how much easier drinking or gambling would have been, but that he was confident he would succeed, and that he would keep me informed of progress.

We corresponded for a year. I sent him names and photographs of English actors for the English parts in the film, and his letters to me informed me not only of the progress of the filmscript, but revealed much of Ray, the man. During that time, John Huston's film *The Man Who Would Be King* had opened in England and the US, in which I had 'earned' – with my performance – an 'also starring' billing along with superstars Michael Caine and Sean Connery. Manikda had read almost all the reviews and he wrote that he, too, owed a debt of gratitude to John Huston. In the winter of 1955, Huston was in Calcutta before leaving for Nepal to scout locations for *The Man Who Would Be King* (he'd then wanted to make it with Clark Gable, Bogart and Cantinflas). Manikda invited him to see a rough cut of *Pather Panchali*, and so moved was Huston by it that he promised "to do something about it, kid". (Only Huston could call Ray, Caine and Connery "Kid"!) And, as promised, he did: he got *Pather Panchali* invited to New York's Museum of Modern Art, where it was seen by the director of the Cannes Film Festival. The rest is history.

Through Manikda's letters, I found out that the producer of *The Chess Players* was Suresh Jindal from Delhi; that the English script would be translated into Urdu by Shama Zaidi and Javed Siddiqui; and that the sets would be designed by Manikda's favourite designer, Bansi Chandragupta. Eventually, the English script by Manikda was sent to me in London, and the date of 6 December 1976 was set for filming to start in the Indrapuri Studios in Calcutta.

A few months before I was to join Manikda, I met a colleague of my wife Jennifer's from the BBC, Pat Outram. When I told her about *The Chess Players* and the major characters in it, including Sir James Outram, Pat explained that not only was she related to Sir James, but she had a book written by his wife which had sketches of him in it. She brought the book to our flat that afternoon, and we sent copies of Sir James Outram's portraits to Manikda the next day. Manikda had researched every nuance of the period: what the Nawabs wore, the colour and variety of the

British uniforms, how the ladies in purdah dressed, what sort of lyrics the poet-king of Avadh wrote (remember Amjad Khan in the film, as Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, humming the exquisite composition, "Jub Chhore chalay hum Lukhnaoo nagaree" – "When I was leaving the empty spaces of Lucknow"). He had inspired the translators of his script to make sure that their Urdu caught the chastity, the sensuousness and the elegance of the language spoken in Lucknow in the last century.

The rapport with Manikda when we started filming *The Chess Players* was total; it was as if we had known each other all our lives. I was on a tremendous high: the joy of speaking what can only be described as a sort of 'Shakespearean' Urdu; the donning of the nawabi costumes of the period – so carefully chosen by Ray – that determined how one walked and sat; the challenge of capturing the moods, modes and manners of 1850s Lucknow – all this and more. And then there was the delight of working with this 'Renaissance' human being, so attuned, so alert, so assured, so receptive. Between takes I would do my impersonations of my favourites – Olivier, Gielgud, Brando, Bogart, Garbo and Marilyn Monroe – and Manikda's booming laughter of appreciation and enjoyment, catching every nuance of the mimicry, will always be with me. He had a wonderfully sensitive ear for the music of the human voice, which is why his dialogue always sounds so true, so spontaneous.

Sanjeev Kumar, who played Mirza, my partner in chess and closest friend, was a big star in Bombay, known for his immense versatility, almost a young Alec Guinness of India. I hadn't known this, so when we met, we met only as two actors, two professionals. We hit it off immediately – sharing avenues of humour, humility and humanity and layers of values acquired through the hardship and challenges we had both gone through – and we remained friends until he died a few years ago. So the 'days and nights' of *The Chess Players* were divided between achieving artistic excellence under the exacting but inspiring direction of the great Mr Ray, by day; and Scotch, actors' stories, mimicry and jokes, with Sanjeev, Jennifer, a marvellous raconteur called David (the 'Munshi' in the first scene of the film), and myself, in our hotel, at night.

Filming with Ray was heaven. He would already have sketched the shots of the scenes in his Book – "*Khata Daw!* – Bring the Book". I can still hear him saying to one of his assistants – and he would let us rehearse the scene very freely, after having established the rough physical parameters. "Monitor", the booming voice would utter; this meant his viewing it through the camera, which he operated himself. We would then film the scene, or shot, after a clearly enunciated "Action" from Ray, and, then, at the exact point where we, as actors, felt the shot should end, would come a very gentle, very sweet voice saying, "Cut". So economical was the filming that often it was virtually a case of one rehearsal, "monitor" and one take. Performances remained fresh and spontaneous and filming galloped along. Ray would supervise the minutest detail, helping the lighting cameraman, the props person, the costume ladies and the make-up man. "I think the light filtering through the 'chick' [a screen made up of dried bamboo leaves]

on a December afternoon in Lucknow will come at this angle", I can still hear him whispering to the lighting cameraman. It was heartening for Sanjeev and I to hear how pleased he was with our work when his wife, Bodee, smilingly told us: "I have never known him like this. When he comes home every evening, he's laughing and singing and jumping like a schoolboy".

The first schedule in Calcutta finished just before Christmas. Then Manikda had to go to Delhi for the film festival of which, that year, he was the chairman. During the course of the festival Suresh Jindal, the producer, invited Kurosawa,

Antonioni and Elia Kazan for drinks and some teasingly excellent slides from our film were shown and duly applauded. On 8 January, Manikda arranged for me to celebrate my birthday with the writer Bharati Mukherjee and her husband. On our way to their house in the taxi, he turned to me and said, "I say, Saeed, what about..." and we both simultaneously finished the sentence: "Sir Richard Attenborough for Outram?" Neither of us knew him, but I promised to arrange a meeting between them when I got back to London. The festival finished and we all gathered in the 'Lukhnau nagaree' of King Wajid Ali Shah of Avadh - Lucknow. Ray had spent several boyhood years with one of his uncles in this city and had a deep fondness for it and everything it stood for - politeness, poetry, manners, elegance.

Filming in Lucknow went smoothly enough. We would start early in the morning to catch the misty light of late January and work until sunset. Most of the atmospheric exteriors - the narrow, historic lanes, the background of mosques and Imambaras (mausoleums), the quail fights and cock fights, the picturesque crowds and children flying kites - were shot in this capital of the Avadh kings. In the evenings we would all retire to Clarke's Hotel. Ray would go back to his wife Bodee, and son, Babu, his main assistant on the film, and to his homework for the morrow, his sketches and notes in the Red Book, and Sanjeev, Jennifer, Suresh Jindal and I would gather in one of our rooms for drinks, relaxation and dinner.

The last scene of the film was shot in a wonderfully lonely spot outside a village some miles from the city. This scene is not only memorable in the film, but the day we shot it will remain fresh in our memories, too. The location had acquired a huge crowd of interested onlookers from neighbouring villages, who stood claustrophobically close to Manikda's camera. Sanjeev was supposed to leave for Bombay the next day, and I had to go to Kenya, via London, for an American film a day later, so the scene had to be finished. At one point, one of Manikda's assistants, seeing Jennifer amid the onlookers, gallantly offered her the only vacant stool. And



'Ray would supervise the minutest detail, the lighting cameraman, the props person, the costume ladies and the make-up man'

Manikda stood behind her for some minutes before saying, in tones of utmost courtesy, "I'm sorry Jennifer, but do you think I could borrow your stool for a little while?" It was the stool from which he operated his camera. On another occasion I had seen this most chivalrous of men actually curtsy - all six foot four of him - while being introduced to a lady in London.

We finished filming just before dusk, to everyone's satisfaction - or almost. The breathing and shuffling noises of the enchanted onlookers had made 'post-synching' this long scene imperative, so Ray and the gentle, sweet-voiced sound recordist, Narinder Singh, and I retired to Manikda's bedroom, drew the curtains, closed the doors and post-synched the entire scene without benefit of picture. "Trust me, my dear Saeed, I have had to do this often in the past. All one needs is a musical ear, and you certainly have one", said Ray. And we did it: Narinder Singh would play the actual sound, and I would simply re-record it afresh, verbatim, matching all the nuances of inflection and emotion of the original. Sanjeev post-synched his part in a Bombay studio much later, and so perfectly do the words match the lip movements that no one can tell the difference. Ray, of course, was also at the editing table, adjusting to perfection.

Back in London, through Rani Dubé (a mutual friend and co-producer, later, on *Gandhi*), I was able to arrange a meeting between Sir Richard Attenborough - who had just arrived from the US - and Manikda, who had flown in from Calcutta for further research at the India Office Library, where we found a thirty-foot-long Company painting of a caravan of British troops marching through an Indian landscape that is brought to life towards the end of the film. At the appointed hour on the last day of February 1977, Manikda, Suresh and I waited for Richard at the Albemarle Street Gaylord's restaurant. He stepped out of his Rolls Royce, entered smiling, folded his hands and said "Namaste" (greetings) and then, "Mr Ray, do you actually want me to act in your film? If you wanted me to read the telephone book, I'd willingly do it for you!" He sat down, refused the offer of wine - he and Manikda were both tee-total - and then said, "But I'm afraid I won't be available until after

May, when *A Bridge Too Far* is released". Manikda looked at me with a smile and almost a wink, and said, "That's all right, Sir Richard, we're quite used to 'waiting'. We'll 'wait' for you until May". Most of Richard's scenes were with Amjad Khan, who had had a near-fatal car accident, and would not have been fit enough to work until May in any case. I heard later from Suresh and others how impressed everyone in Calcutta had been with Richard's thoroughly British professionalism, punctuality and precision, perfecting his Scottish brogue and wearing without demur heavy winter overcoats in the stifling heat of a Calcutta summer. Manikda, of course, was over the moon with Richard's perfectly researched and performed Sir James Outram.

After a very pleasant Indian lunch, Sir Richard offered, "May I drop you all somewhere?" We three looked at each other and said, "Thanks a lot, but it's a lovely day and we'd rather walk". And walk we did, like naughty schoolboys, with springs in our feet and spirits soaring, through the streets of Soho, finally deciding to see Peter Finch's last film, in which Faye Dunaway makes love to him while reciting the *Wall Street Journal*!

The London Film Festival featured *The Chess Players* as its main attraction that year, and everyone was looking forward to seeing the completed version, including me, when suddenly I was informed that the film was not 'ready', and so would not be available for the '77 festival. Further investigation revealed that it had not been subtitled. I immediately got in touch with Manikda and it was agreed that the film would be shown, with me acting out all the parts in English from the subtitle script from a book at the back of the theatre. This arrangement was a great success and the film was shown three times. I expected some comment from the great Mr Ray about my subtitle substitute performance, when he informed me he had given his earphones and seat to one of the usherettes, and so had missed it altogether.

The film finally opened at the Academy Cinema, ran for months, and became a *cause célèbre*, attracting among its admirers Sir Ralph Richardson, Lord Snowdon and Ingrid Bergman. And because BBC2 also showed *The Chess Players*, more people in Britain associate Ray with this film than with any other. But in India and the US, it was not so lucky. In 1978, Ray, Suresh and I were invited to a whistle-stop tour, beginning at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC and ending at the American Film Academy in Hollywood, with stops in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco. In LA, as chief guest, Mr Ray spoke to members of the Academy, and we both spoke to a rejuvenated John Huston on the phone. The lion had licked his wounds - yet another divorce, this time from 'Cee Cee' - in his Puerto Vallarta lair, and come back roaring to film again. Like three excited schoolboys - one tall, one bearded, one me - we celebrated the critical success of our film by romping at Disneyland.

A treasure trove of memories, of moments spent with a marvellous human being, will remain with me forever. And like Olivier, Marilyn, Peggy Ashcroft, Raji Kapoor and Huston, Manikda, too, will always be alive in my heart.

Beyond orientalism

Too often, western critics have flattened out the complexity of Ray's career, argues Ashish Rajadhyaksha, as he restores Ray's films to Indian history – to the process of post-war modernisation and to Indira Gandhi's State of Emergency

Film-maker and critic Chidananda Das Gupta, who produced a landmark study of Ray in 1981, pointed out one of the problems in India of evaluating his mentor's achievements: "...the Golden Lion of St Mark in Venice, the Golden Bear and two Best Director awards and a special jury award for the totality of his work in Berlin, the Selznick award, the Sutherland Trophy, Best Film for 1957 and Best Director of the year 1959 at San Francisco, honorary doctorates from Oxford and London Universities, Most Outstanding Film Director of Half-a-Century... The depth and extent of the Western response to Ray often mystifies Indians; he is great, but is he that great?" (*Filmworld*, Bombay, January 1980).

In the beginning, there was the classic 1929 Bibhutibhushan Bannerjee novel on which Ray's first and most influential film, *Pather Panchali* (*Song of the Little Road*, 1955) is based, a chronicle of the history of pre-Second World War Bengal through the story of a young boy who leaves his village for the city. Then there was the film itself, whose four-years-in-the-making story has become part of Indian film legend. Then there was the film-maker, ancestrally associated with the landed gentry of North Calcutta and its nineteenth-century reform movements, with Shantiniketan, and with Tagore; with mass communication and commercial art, the Calcutta Film Society and Renoir's *The River*. And then there was the film's reception in the US.

It is this last that has in many ways proved the most telling factor, for the US response to the film established the image of Ray as a humanist "who sees that life itself is good no matter how bad" (Pauline Kael, *I Lost It at the Movies*) and created the notion of a 'Ray movie' that would remain remarkably fixed, whatever the film under discussion. For example, "Ray's genius is for the lyrical, for the contemplation of life as a blend of material and spiritual beauty" (*Newsweek* on *Ashani Sanket*, *Distant Thunder*, 1973); "Timeless and international. Its story and characters are applicable on any place on earth" (*Art Film Publications*, Los Angeles, on *Apur Sansar*, *The World of Apu*, 1959). The projection of this western orientalist phantasy on to the post-War 'third' world later extended to the personal characteristics of the film-maker himself, even to his English-speaking accent: "That presence became articulated in the most beautiful use of English I have ever heard... The sensitive exactness of the words he used was... the most perfect revelation of why he could make a film like *Pather Panchali*" (Frances Flaherty, quoted in Seton); "...talked briefly and simply in a strong, pleasant, and

above all musical voice of indefinable accent" (Robinson).

Ray himself has on a few occasions expressed his discomfort with this kind of typecasting, saying, for instance, to a *Sunday Observer* interviewer (Bombay, 1984) that it was no longer enough for him that a film he makes be called a masterpiece; he wanted intelligent comment. "I am fully aware now, thanks to my Western critics, of the Western traits in my films. They have so often been brought to my notice that I can actually name them: irony, understatement, humour, open endings... It is not as if I find myself saying: Ah, now for a bit of British understatement. They are used intuitively to best serve the needs of the subject..." (Armes). Asked by Shyam Benegal (in the latter's documentary, *Satyajit Ray*, 1984) why early twentieth-century Bengali literature was such a major source for his film stories, Ray went to some length to deny that he made only period movies, pointing to his contemporary Calcutta films, his original screenplays and his children's fantasies. And towards the end of his career, with *Ganashatru* (*An Enemy of the People*, 1989), *Shakha Proshakha* (*Branches of the Tree*, 1990) and *Agantuk* (*The Stranger*, 1991), he said with increasing frustration that he was no longer interested in the past; he wanted to set his films within current events and to deal with matters of institutionalised corruption. He now felt the need to write his own stories rather than base his films on available fiction.

Until the early 70s, Ray was seen in India as an influential member of the first generation of post-Independence artists. This generation, of film-makers, writers, theatre directors and painters, worked with different programmes, yet were defined collectively through a common, and often stated, desire to integrate their nationalist legacy with a globalising aesthetic of modernism. Through the 60s, several essays by Ray extended his early acknowledgment of the influence of Renoir and De Sica to include the editing of Kurosawa and Ford, Truffaut's tracking camera and Godard's soundtrack. More than that, Ray shared with most Indian artists of his generation in the late 60s the liberal nationalist discomfort at the 'Naxalite' (Marxist-Leninist) Communist Party of India's appropriation of the voice of radical change. The Party's student agitations and consequent state brutality informed his Calcutta films – *Pratidwandi* (*The Adversary*, 1970), *Seemabaddha* (*Company Limited*, 1971) – and even led to an uneasy contemplation that he might have to leave Calcutta for Bombay.

It was during this period, the early 70s, that Ray's reputation in India as a member of that first post-Independence generation of artists began to fade, to be replaced by a new identity. This was partly a consequence of the power of the western image of the film-maker and his work, which was imported to India – not without his encouragement. Versions of the 'Ray movie' started to be made in Kannada, Malayalam, even in Hindi (Shyam Benegal). And Ray, as its most important pioneer, started to claim for the first time that "I think of myself as a Bengali and my films are aimed primarily at our own audience" (Chidananda Das Gupta).

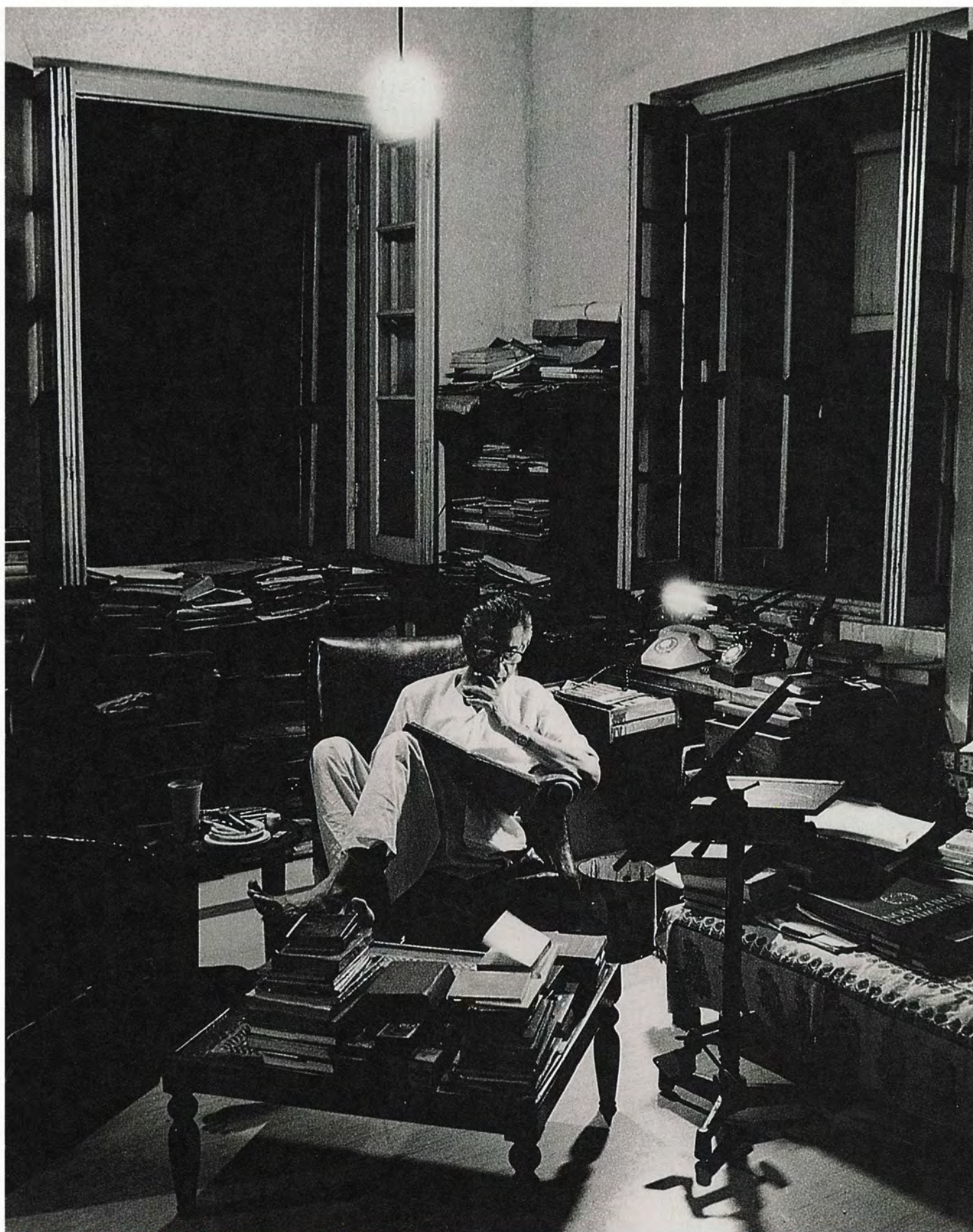
The nativist tag remained an uneasy one, and is evident less in Ray's films than in the position he was made – and in certain ways allowed him-

self – to represent. In Bengal, for instance, the image of a Renaissance figure was presented through a consistent downgrading of his films as his most significant creations, with more and more programming emphasising his commercial-art sketches, his children's short stories (the Felu and Shonkhu characters), his childhood reminiscences (*Jokhon Chhoto Chhilam*, 1982). Right now, the West Bengal government is apparently vying with Calcutta's biggest publishing house, Ananda Bazar Patrika, to assemble his collected works, believed to be the hottest literary property in the history of Bengali publishing. And Ray could sometimes go along with this line: this writer, in his only encounter with the film-maker, accompanied an English radio journalist to Ray's Calcutta home in December 1990, shortly after *Shakha Proshakha* was made. Asked informally about his experience of working for a French producer, Ray said he looked forward to an international distribution of his film. He added that in Calcutta itself, projection conditions in most big theatres prevented him from participating in the local commercial releases of his work, and that barring a few private screenings in his native city, he wished now more and more to show outside Bengal: in Delhi, Bombay and particularly in Kerala, with its highly film-literate audiences, all places where he had never had a good commercial release. The tape-recorder switched on: "I make my films", he said, "for a Bengali audience".

And then Ray died. Shortly before his death, and shortly after he received the lifetime-achievement Oscar, he was awarded the Bharat Ratna – India's highest honour, and until that point the exclusive preserve of politicians, usually former Prime Ministers. He was also given the National Best Film prize for his last feature, *Agantuk*. Commenting on this last bit of adulatory excess, an *Economic Times* editorial somewhat cynically dubbed Ray the most awarded film-maker of all time, wondering why critical understanding was being replaced by appreciation of so dubious a nature. (Ray himself had at times disdained even to enter his films for the National Film awards.)

When he died, India was primed to play out yet again the passing of what was described as an 'era', as Ray was recast in his earlier, nationalist mould. Government flags flew at half-mast; public institutions were closed down to enable the citizens of his native Calcutta to pay their last respects. India had rehearsed the scenario on a similar scale the previous year, when Rajiv Gandhi's assassination signalled with the same clarity the passing of a nationalist dream. Then, as now, the man came to mean more than his work: Rajiv Gandhi, contrary to his political ideology, was cast as the last of the Nehrus; Ray was repeatedly described as the last figure in Bengal's nineteenth-century cultural renaissance, which had spearheaded India's social reform and nationalist movement.

Put these associations together with the description by Gary Arnold in his *Washington Times* obituary of Ray's televised hospital-bed reception of his Oscar, and you get the picture: "...it's gratifying that he had the opportunity to orchestrate his own deathbed scene. And it ►



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEMAI GHOSH FROM 'SATYAJIT RAY AT 70', EIFFEL EDITIONS

'I am fully aware now, thanks to my Western critics, of the Western traits in my films... It is not as if I find myself saying: Ah, now for a bit of British understatement...'

◀ was an extraordinary performance – the best of its kind since Clifton Webb's fictionalised farewell as Elliott Templeton in *The Razor's Edge*”.

Nandalal Bose, Shantiniketan artist and Ray's teacher, is a controversial figure in contemporary Indian art history. Ray described his experience as Bose's student in 'Calm Without, Fire Within': "As students of painting in Rabindranath Tagore's university in Shantiniketan, we had to learn the rudiments of Chinese calligraphy. We rubbed our sticks of Chinese ink on porcelain palettes, dipped our bamboo-stemmed Japanese brushes in it and held them poised perpendicularly over mounted sheets of Nepalese parchment. 'Now draw a tree', our Professor Bose would say. 'Draw a tree, but not in the Western fashion. Not from the top downwards. A tree grows up, not down. The strokes must be from the base upwards...' [T]his was basic – this reverence for life, for organic growth. When you paint, each stroke of brush, each movement of finger, of wrist, of elbow, contemplates and celebrates this growth. And not just things that live and grow. Everything that comprises perceptible reality is observed, felt, analysed and reduced to its basic form, basic texture, basic rhythm”.

Much of the debate around Bose concerns his enormously influential, Gandhi-inspired definitions of what nationalism should mean in Indian art: abandonment of easel painting, emphasis – as Ray writes – on organicism. These definitions received official Congress Party sanction when Bose organised the village craft exhibitions that accompanied Congress sessions at Faizpur (1936) and Haripura (1938). More crucial, however, was Bose's formal invention of India's first completely 'orientalist' idea of the painted surface as a space suffused, even before it is painted upon, with the plenitude of nature. Most of his paintings literally celebrate the surface, ornament it with motifs drawn from religious and folk art, and often, Bose would claim, from nature itself.

The concept strongly informs Ray's early realism – the Apu trilogy of *Pather Panchali*, *Aparajito* (*The Unvanquished*, 1956) and *Apur Sansar*; *Jalsaghar* (*The Music Room*, 1958); and parts of *Charulata* (*The Lonely Wife*, 1964) – films that form the kernel of his definition of the cinema, as they do the popular idea of the 'Ray movie'. In all these films, key characters are assigned a highly idealised, even mystical, set of privileged spaces. Here, the film says, they spread out their essential being: Durga in her hide-and-seek ritual (*Pather Panchali*), Bishwamoy Roy going through his morning routine (*Jalsaghar*) or *Charulata* searching for a Bankim novel (*Charulata*). These spaces are occupied by objects that for the characters resonate with primal emotional appeal; and at certain key moments are the site of the abolition of the distinction between cinematic and real time.

But then time itself becomes, in these sequences, a more abstracted entity, imbued with historical anticipation. This is clearest in what is probably the single most famous sequence in Ray's work, which traces the whole painful shift from mystical indigenism to the industrial mythology of the post-War era. The sequence, in *Pather Panchali*, shows the children, Apu and Durga, tentatively approaching one of the electricity pylons which now dominate the

paddy fields where water buffalo roam. After listening to the 'singing' of the wires, the children lose themselves in a sea of rustling white fronds, where the sound of the wind then becomes the roar of an approaching steam engine. The children rush up to the tracks as the train thunders by, and a great smear of smoke is left hanging in the sky. The whole drama of their wonder and anticipation of the future is placed in these feats of technology.

Ray was a latecomer to the modern era, notwithstanding the fact that *Pather Panchali* was four years in the making. Set within the still-menacing memory of the Second World War, a certain ideal of realism had already swept through Indian cinema, in many cases linked explicitly to an industrial programme and to the theme of nation-building. Its major protagonist was the Communist Party-backed Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA), with films like K. A. Abbas' *Dharti Ke Lal* (*Children of the Earth*), Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* (*The Lower Depths*), V. Shantaram's *Dr Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani* (*The Immortal Story of Dr Kotnis*), all three in 1946; or the seminal *Chinnamul* (1951), with whose script, according to its director, Nemai Ghosh, Ray was closely involved. As films of this kind developed into a commercial mainstream, whether through the same filmmakers (especially Abbas, Anand and Shantaram), through others such as Bengali writer/director Premendra Mitra (*Moyna Kagaj*, 1954), or actors like Balraj Sahni and Chhabi Biswas, they heralded a shift that was on a par with the shift from Gandhi's pre-War emphasis on village-craft indigenism to the full-blown Nehruvian 'temples of the future' dream.

This realism functioned entirely through symbols – and technology was one of the commonest. The symbols were believed to express the idea of the 'contemporary', or even more compelling 'future', and could be imbued with psychoanalytic and political associations. Raj Kapoor, for example, in his *Shri 420* (*Mr 420*, 1955, the same year as *Pather Panchali*), characterised post-Independence Indian society in terms of money-fetishism, its acquisitive desire excluding his infantile longing for salvation. In Nitin Bose's *Deedar* (1951) the blind hero is delivered into the world of sight by a medical eye-operation; when he sees this world includes his betrayed lover, he puts out his eyes.

Realism, then, was for the most part a subterfuge: a means of weighting certain kinds of symbols of the contemporary with certain kinds of desires or apprehensions, all the while restaging earlier genres – the social reformist movie and its religious counterpart, the devotional movie – as full-blown melodrama. Ray himself – contrary to the common perception of his Renoir/De Sica persona – was not at the time averse to these genres or to the idea of updating them. He worked with the morality fable in



'I think of myself as a Bengali... I make my films for a Bengali audience'

Parash Pathar (*The Philosopher's Stone*, 1958); even in *Kanchenjunga* (1962). Indeed, the inept naturalism of *Kanchenjunga*'s soundtrack, or the uneasy dissolves in *Devi* (*The Goddess*, 1960) – especially when set alongside the remarkable crane shot of the goddess Kali with which the film opens – form textbook examples of the limitations of realism as ideology, despite its seemingly unending usefulness as symbol or aspiration.

It was not the first time in recent Indian art that the real was thus symbolised. When in the nineteenth century Indian artists – court and bazaar alike – were faced with the technology of easel and frame, the photograph and the woodcut print, many

of the more successful ones handled the problem by ascribing often mystical meanings to the technology they used. For example, photographers who joined bazaar artists at the temple town of Nathdwara invoked the idea of a divine immortality by pasting photographs of pilgrims on to drawings of the deity.

Satyajit Ray when he saw De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* (1948) in London: "I had the proof [that one could really work with an amateur cast]. And it [*Pather Panchali*] was all shot on location, at least 90 per cent shot on location. I had the proof that one could shoot out there, in all kinds of light. I had been told by professional directors here that you had to have control over the light, which meant you had to have artificial light. 'You can't control the sun', that's what they said. 'And if you want rain, you have to create it artificially, because how could you control actual, natural rain, it stops and goes and comes'" (Das Gupta).

Literary historian Meenakshi Mukherjee, on the original 1929 novel *Pather Panchali*: "Bibhutibhusan's novel is conditioned... by a very different concept of time and of aesthetic form than what underlie Western realistic fiction. The word *Panchali* of the original title refers to a devotional narrative song which continues for a long stretch of time without any perceptible climax, and where the story does not follow a rigid sequential order..."

"The movement from the village to the city and the consequent nostalgia for a lost paradise which *Pather Panchali* deals with only incidentally, has turned out in the next half-century to be one of the major themes in novels written in the Indian languages" ("The Road Revisited", *Journal of Arts & Ideas*, No. 4).

Mukherjee gives other examples of what she identifies as a whole genre of pre-Second World War fiction that uses a realism based on minute description of the everyday, together with an epic scale of changing seasons and vast landscapes, of death and the struggle to live. She says that the author of *Pather Panchali* and its 1931 sequel, *Aparajito*, although familiar with some

western literature, reveals little in the way of European influence.

It was this novel, then, that Ray chose to update with his cinema. It was as though he looked back on the novel, and through the novel to its pre-War world, and through that to India's near-century-old history of encountering the modern. Now, finally, the fumbling, the anticipation, the drama invested in the singing wires could find contemporary form – and ideological stability.

Despite the novel's location in a pre-War past, in those early years after Independence you couldn't – certainly Indian viewers couldn't – forget what those placid paddy fields and the city of Calcutta had just been through, although few foreign reviewers ever mention it. Independence, as an event, brought to a climax a series of earlier events that had already caused a traumatic shift in the realist mode: the 1943 Bengal famine; the 1946-47 Partition.

Ray's retrospective vision was one of the high points of Indian cultural modernism, to the extent that India has had such a thing. This modernism had no debate between Brecht and Lukacs to inform it, it built no neo-realist citadel of truth, had no Adorno-like warnings about a totalitarian culture industry. And yet – in the way Nehru consciously located nation-building as part of a globalising process of modernisation, with a fully articulated aesthetic component – it did have certain overlaps with Europe, as Ray's work demonstrates. Nehru wrote his seminal *Discovery of India* – part autobiography, part travelogue, part history lesson – precisely to invent this tradition of modernisation. And he substantiated it by inviting Rossellini to make his India films and Le Corbusier to design the city of Chandigarh “to show Indians that modern architecture exists”. Several Indian artists – oil-painter M. F. Husain and musician Ravi Shankar among others – now engaged with recently demystified technology, and the promise that for the first time in India's troubled history, we would be able to discover our true place in the world.

Not all of them, indeed very few, supported the expressly nationalist component of Nehru's idea of modernism: historian D. D. Kosambi, while endorsing Nehru's space-research programmes, reviewed *Discovery of India* in an essay evocatively titled ‘The Bourgeoisie Comes of Age in India’. And artists from the former left avant-garde still saw no reason to celebrate: Ritwik Ghatak, for instance, shared no sense that national belonging was inscribed in the newly available means of domination and control, and single-handedly turned the freedom-struggle debate around to place on the cultural agenda his own radically different sense of home. But for those who did share in the moment, modernism appeared capable of explaining for the first time the trauma of India's past,

even as it provided, with its instruments of understanding, a sense of present and future self-determination.

Satyajit Ray: “... the films, of Godard and Glauber Rocha and the rest? No, certainly not, because I still believe in the individual and in personal concepts rather than in a broad ideology, which keeps changing all the time” (Das Gupta).

Then the anticipation disappeared, and all that was left were the objects: privileged at one time, like Durga's secretly stolen fruit, now little more than deadweight. For Ray himself, cinema as a liberating apparatus lasted, in retrospect, a very short while. In *Mahanagar* (*The Big City*, 1963) there is the mistrustful shot of the Anglo-Indian secretary holding a pair of scissors, low in wide angle (quoting from memory); Ray's first explicit depiction of a pure fetish object. *Nayak* (*The Hero*, 1966) almost revels in its moralistic condemnation of brutalised technology, the unsettling train journey merging with the unsettled insecurity of the film-star hero and his nightmare objects. After *Mahanagar*, Ray started to include in his films in an increasingly formulaic way a character or event that at a certain point would inject a virtual social cancer into the film's comfortably naturalist world. In *Seemabaddha*, for example, news of the rejected consignment from the hero's company leads to a sequence of top-angle shots and fast cutting, even a long zoom into the telephone wire that connects the hero with his corrupt personnel manager.

Sequences like these reveal Ray's increasing mistrust, into and through the 70s, of his cinematic apparatus. By a logic startlingly clear in retrospect, it appears that the sense of control he invested in that apparatus in the idealism of the 50s had given way to ideological associations that, as he said, “keep changing all the time”. He was still in the middle of his Calcutta films – *Pratidwandi*, *Seemabaddha*, *Jana-Aranya* – and was signalling with growing frustration a reality that appeared too complicated to handle. This well-documented crisis has now become part of Ray lore. Acclaimed for his revolutionising of acting in Indian cinema, Ray was now unable to do anything in what is probably the single most powerful area of ideological manipulation in film: the soundtrack. With the Calcutta films, he started to convey more and more information through sound, with the visual illustrating what the dialogue was saying. He became increasingly embroiled in problems of naturalism – such as the accent his actors should use in their occasional English lines – even as he succumbed to the far more controversial convention of submerging effects beneath his dialogue tracks. And then came the lush colour of *Ashani Sanket*, in a film supposed to be set in famine conditions.

Ray's crisis took place in the context of Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1972, during a period in which the bourgeoisie who had ‘come of age’ with the *Discovery of India* demanded increasingly fascist state intervention, culminating in the State of Emergency of 1975. Ray clearly had no sympathy for the Indira regime, and – almost in retaliation – set out for the first time his own definition of the tenets of the ‘Ray movie’ through a series of violent attacks on the emerging independent ‘New’ Indian cinema. Ray argued that it was all very well for the west to have an avant-garde, where film-makers could use “the element of permissive sex... as a safeguard in nine cases out of ten”. (This, incidentally, remains the standard argument of the commercial Hindi film industry, and its excuse for its own financial unviability.) Film-makers in the ‘third’ world, by contrast, should “bear in mind certain limitations they have to face, the ‘conventions’ that even they have to follow” (‘An Indian New Wave?’). These were the primacy of a story, the necessity to use film stars to sell the film, and an elaborate script. The regionalism motif was also part of the list.

It was ironic, to say the least, that the Emergency held the ‘Ray movie’ as the model to emulate in imposing its stringent censorship restrictions on independent film-makers. The Film Finance Corporation, for instance, was instructed by a parliamentary commission only to fund films that demonstrated: “1. Human interest in the story; 2. Indianness in theme and approach; 3. Characters with whom the audience can identify; 4. Dramatic content”. And the notorious *Film-20* series commissioned art-house shorts that complied with these requirements to illustrate each point in Mrs Gandhi's twenty-point Economic Programme.

Ray, in direct response, quit making films set in the contemporary for the next fourteen years, withdrawing into children's stories (at least one of which, *Hirak Rajar Deshe*, *The Kingdom of Diamonds*, 1980, made veiled allusions to the Emergency), and period movies, including his trusty Tagore (*Ghare-Baire*, *The Home and the World*, 1984). And when he returned to the contemporary (*Ganashatru*, *Shakha Proshakha*, *Agantuk*), it was, in the sympathetic words of Amaresh Misra, as “an armchair liberal functioning as a simple humanist who now viewed social reality in terms of a naive individual-versus-society conflict and placed his hopes and disillusionments either in some grassroots cultural activity or the travails of innocent children, sensitive but mentally retarded figures and maverick outsiders”.

Whatever Ray would have had to say about it, this India – inducted into a global market on terms set by US trade representatives – was not entering the place in the world he had sought in the heraldic 50s when he made *Pathar Panchali*.

References Roy Armes, *Third World Film Making and the West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987); Satyajit Ray, ed. Chidananda Das Gupta (New Delhi, 1981); Amaresh Misra, ‘Satyajit Ray's Films’, *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay, 16-23 May 1992); Satyajit Ray, ‘Calm Without, Fire Within’ (1964) and ‘An Indian New Wave?’ (1971) in *Our Films, Their Films* (New Delhi, 1976); Andrew Robinson, *The Inner Eye* (London, 1989); Marie Seton, *Satyajit Ray, Portrait of a Director* (London, 1978)



‘I still believe in the individual and in personal concepts’

Filmography

Satyajit Ray

Born 2 May 1921, Calcutta
Died 23 April 1992, Calcutta

"My grandfather was a painter, a poet, and also a scientist who, in addition to editing the first children's magazine in Bengal, 'Sandesh' [revived by Ray in 1961], had introduced the half-tone block to India. My father was equally well known. He it was who wrote, among other works, Bengal's classic Book of Nonsense – an Englishman might call him India's Edward Lear. I myself was attracted first to physics and economics, graduating with honours in those fields from Calcutta University. I went to Shantiniketan, a somewhat unusual school... founded at the turn of the century by Rabindranath Tagore. The Tagores and my own family had been friends down the years, and so it was natural that I should go there. Anyhow, it was there that I first developed my aesthetic interests and acquired some skill in drawing.

"Having decided that there was no future for me in the fine arts, in 1943 I joined an advertising firm, as an art director... When I was in a position to do so I introduced into their advertisements a fusion of modern Western and Bengal tradition, to give it a new look.

"In 1950 I went to England for a while, for my firm, and while I was there, in three months, I saw more than 90 films. I was studying everything ceaselessly. It was 'Bicycle Thief' that finally gave me the idea of how to make my own film. No stars, and mainly on location. When I got home I started to look about hopefully for finances. For all of 1951 I tried to get backing. But I convinced no one. What I wanted to do had not been done before... The only kind of professional encouragement I got came from one single man. A friend of mine who had worked with Jean Renoir on 'The River' had told him of my plans and later, when I met Renoir, he insisted that I shouldn't give up".

Films as director and scriptwriter

Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)

115 mins (1955)

"I found the little girl in a school, and the woman in a store where she was employed. I had not left my job and we could work only Saturdays and Sundays. It was not

even possible for us to edit what we shot; so we could show it to no one. To be able to continue, I sold my library, my art books, my mother's jewelry and my wife's... We had to interrupt our work for about a year. I was completely discouraged, almost ready to give up, when my mother arranged to have me meet Dr. B. C. Roy, Prime Minister of Bengal... He saw our film, and he obtained a subsidy for us to finish it".

Aparajito (The Unvanquished)

113 mins (1956)

Parash Pathar (The Philosopher's Stone)

111 mins (1958)

Jalsaghar (The Music Room)

100 mins (1958)

Apur Sansar (The World of Apu)

106 mins (1959)

"When 'Aparajito' had won the Golden Lion at Venice, some journalists had asked me if this film was the second of a trilogy; I replied yes to them mechanically, without my reply really corresponding to my intentions at the time; indeed quite the contrary. Later, Nehru said to me 'I would like to know what became of your Apu'. I replied to him quite bluntly: 'Really, two films with him are enough for me'. He insisted, and advised me to write a scenario from 'The World of Apu'".

Devi (The Goddess)

93 mins (1960)
"My sixth film 'Devi' was much more controversial. It is not true that it had difficulties with censorship, but immediately after its first showings it was attacked by the orthodox Hindus, who interpreted it as a 'Brahmu' film. Brahmu is the name given to those who profess a reformed unitarian religion, the Brahmu Samaj, founded about 1800 in Calcutta... During the last century its very liberal doctrine won the intellectual milieux of Calcutta, the Tagore family and my own... 'Devi' was not very popular, but I have never regretted handling a subject so full of grandeur, nobility and dignity".

Rabindranath Tagore (1961) documentary; commentary by Ray

Teen Kanya (Three Daughters)

Three stories: 'The Postmaster' 56 mins;

'Monihara' 61 mins; 'Samapti' 56 mins

Kanchenjunga

102 mins (1962)

"My first original scenario, my first film in colour, my first really contemporary subject... Some people had said that my first films formed a tableau of the different social classes of Bengal... I had not yet



Aparajito (1956)

dealt with my country's rich bourgeoisie, a class I know rather well".

Abhijan (The Expedition)

150 mins (1962)

Mahanagar (The Big City)

131 mins (1963)

Charulata (The Lonely Wife)

117 mins (1964)

"This was an old project, to which people had made many objections. In it the heroine is in love with her brother-in-law and people told me that the Indian audience would not accept a situation so offensive. I thought on the contrary that it would sympathise with the woman. I was right. The film was moderately successful and nobody spoke of its immorality".

Two

15 mins (1964)

Kapurush-o-Mahapurush (The Coward and the Holy Man)

(1965) Two stories:

'Kapurush' 74 mins; 'Mahapurush' 65 mins

Nayak (The Hero)

120 mins (1966)

Chirikhana (The Zoo)

125 mins (1967)

Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha)

132 mins (1968)

"[My son] found his papa's films too tragic and so asked me to adapt a story written by his grandfather, for children, a kind of fairy tale. It will be a musical fantasy with gods, demons, singers and comic actors trying to prevent war between two nations...Part of the film will be shot in helicopters which will land the heroes in mogul palaces, the castles of Maharajahs, old historic forts, and of course the Taj Mahal – to which I prefer the dead city of Fatehpur Sikri".

Aranyer Din Ratri (Days and Nights in the Forest)

115 mins (1969)

Pratidwandi (The Adversary)

110 mins (1970)

"Before I made 'The Adversary', I'd often been criticised for being non-political. After that film, they thought I had become politically committed, and it was very well received. There's a revolutionary character in 'The Adversary', which is enough for the more simple-minded people... But my previous film, 'Days and Nights in the Forest', wasn't understood in India. They thought it very frivolous because of its surface, but they completely missed the implications of the structure, which I think makes it one of my best pictures".

Seemabaddha (Company Limited)

112 mins (1971)

Sikkim (1971) documentary; commentary and sound by Ray

The Inner Eye 22 mins (1972) documentary; commentary and sound by Ray

Ashani Sanket (Distant Thunder)

101 mins (1973)

"On 'Distant Thunder', I was attacked by some of our critics for using colour for a subject that deals with poverty. But one of the points that the author of the original story makes is that this was a famine which was not caused by a lack of harvest or by a drought. Nature remained beautiful, people died and suffered in surroundings of great physical beauty".

Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress)

115 mins (1974) From Ray's own novel

Jana-Aranya (The Middleman)

131 mins (1975)



Devi (1960)



Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (1968)

Bala 33 mins (1976) documentary; commentary by Ray

Shatranj ke Khilari (The Chess Players) 124 mins (1977)

"The original story is hardly a dozen pages, and it concerns only the two chess-playing friends. The British takeover of the prince's state is just mentioned as an event happening in the background. I decided to expand the story and to have the political event running parallel to the original story. Eventually the film turned out to be bilingual, English and Hindi, because there was an opportunity to use Richard Attenborough... My Bengali films reach a very, very small section of the Indian public. So there you have... a language which is understood more or less all over India... it's not strictly Hindi, it's Urdu, a classical form of Hindi.

"It has hardly been shown outside of Calcutta: in Bombay it had a three-week run and then it was taken off, though it was doing very well at the box office. It was taken off by the distributors because they didn't want me encroaching into the Hindi world".

Joi Baba Felunath (The Elephant God)

112 mins (1978) From Ray's own novel

Hirak Rajar Deshe (The Kingdom of Diamonds) 118 mins (1980)

Pikoo 26 mins (1980) For television;

from Ray's short story 'Pikur Diary'

Sadgati (Deliverance)

52 mins (1981) For television

Ghare-Baire (The Home and the World)

140 mins (1984)

Ray wrote a screenplay from Tagore's novel in the late 40s, which nearly became his first film. "But the producer went on to have second thoughts about the screenplay, and suggested some changes... This led to a deadlock, and ended in the project falling through. I felt like a pricked balloon at the time, but I can now say, after thirty-five years, that I consider it the greatest good fortune that the film was not made. Reading the screenplay now, I can see how pitifully superficial and Hollywoodish it was".

Sukumar Ray 30 mins (1987) documentary about Ray's father

Ganashatru (An Enemy of the People)

100 mins (1989)

Shakha Proshakha (Branches of the Tree)

120 mins (1990)

Agantuk (The Stranger) 120 mins (1991)

Films as scriptwriter

Indian Iron and Steel (1957) documentary;

d: Harisadhan Das Gupta

Baksa Badal (1964) also music;

d: Nityananda Dutta

Phatikchand (1981) also music;

d: Sandip Ray

Satyajit Ray Presents (1986) also music;

13 short stories for television;

d: Sandip Ray

Satyajit Ray Presents 2 (1988/9) also music;

two short stories and a novel for television;

d: Sandip Ray

Goopy Bagha Phiray Elo (The Return of Goopy and Bagha) (1990) story only; also songs

and music; sc/d: Sandip Ray

Films as composer

Ray wrote the music for all the films he

directed from 'Teen Kanya' (1961)

onwards. Also: **Shakespeare Wallah** (1965)

d: James Ivory, and the following

documentaries: **Darjeeling, Himalayan**

Fantasy (d: Bansi Chandragupta);

Ganga Sagar Mela (d: Bansi Chandragupta);

Glimpses of West Bengal (d: Bansi

Chandragupta); **The House that Died**

(1968; d: Tony Mayer); **Max Mueller**

(d: John Thiele); **Quest of Health**

(d: Harisadhan Das Gupta). Ray was also

narrator on 'Max Mueller' and on the

documentary **Tidal Bore** (d: Vijaya Mulay)

"Indian music has only decorative

possibilities for films. The idea in Indian

music is the exact opposite of traditional

Western music: that you *do not* depart from

the tonic, from the key. Indian music is

melodic; it's linear, except that you have a

percussion accompaniment which is a sort

of counterpoint... If there is modulation,

the whole structure is destroyed.

"You have to be a knowledgeable

listener in order to *feel* the tensions,

because you know that a certain *raga* has

a certain linear structure... But the notes

are not all established immediately... The

greater the musician, the more he is able to

sustain your interest by gradually unfolding

the pattern. And when finally the whole

raga is established, there's a fulfilment".

(Quotations from: *Film Quarterly*, Winter

1958; *Cahiers du cinéma* (in English),

No. 3, 1966; *Sight & Sound*, Winter

1972/3; *American Film*, July/August 1978;

Stills, Autumn 1981; *Monthly Film Bulletin*,

September 1984)

ATTENBOROUGH ON RAY

Sir Richard Attenborough remembers Ray

He was a man of immense grace. I did not know him intimately, in that I could not claim him as a truly close friend. He was, however, someone whom I had known for some thirty years.

Before I visited India for the first time in 1962, I had already seen not only *Pather Panchali*, but the other two magical movies which make up the Apu trilogy. And what an impact they had had on me. They opened up visions of a country about which I was utterly ignorant. I had no idea what made up the life of its teeming cities but, through Ray's eyes, I felt suddenly that I had an immediate understanding and familiarity with what was, after all, the majority of Indian life; its vast countryside and its immeasurable mass of villages. It was an extraordinary piece of good fortune that he was in Delhi on the first of what were to become my many visits to that wondrous country.

He was very, very tall. He gave one the impression of a touching shyness, particularly in the public arena. In private, however, certainly when engaged on his own subject, he was unreservedly forthcoming. He was blessed with a massive smile: it took over his whole face. He was deeply serious, though, about film, about his work. He believed passionately in the relevance of cinema and, certainly through his own films, perhaps did more to introduce India to the rest of the world than any other human being.

Although not a great follower of Gandhi – there was much in Babu's philosophy with which he disagreed – he was phenomenally generous to me in both time and effort in furthering my passion to make a film about the Mahatma's life.

He came to England in the mid-70s to further his production of *The Chess Players* and it was on that trip that he invited me to lunch with his producer, Suresh Jindal (who later became Associate Producer on *Gandhi*), and lead actor Saeed Jaffrey to ask me to play in his film. I had by now not only seen the Apu trilogy a number of times, but also many other fine examples of his remarkable body of work. Would I be interested in playing Sir James Outram, he asked? "Of course", I replied. "But we haven't got a finished script to show you", he said. I know I should properly have replied that I would await the final version, but instead I blurted that I would attempt to perform the telephone directory if he asked me to do so. This was one of the many occasions on which I basked in that massive smile. "We don't have much money", he said. "Pay my fare and put me up and I will do it for nothing", I replied. If possible, his smile became even more seraphic.

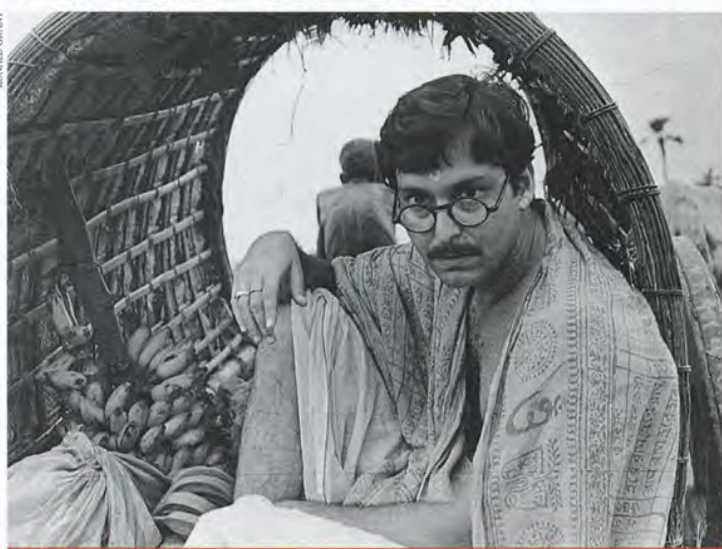
He waited several weeks for me to be free to make the journey to India and when I arrived in Calcutta, he and Suresh met me at Dum Dum airport and bore me off to the most comfortable of hotels. Sir James Outram was the last major role I played in the cinema, and how proud I am to be able to record the fact.

God it was hot – 115 degrees, I believe – and I was wearing the full scarlet uniform of a high-ranking British army officer. Ray's courtesies to me were without reservation – every possible concern was evidenced in his attempts to grant me every help I might need. Electric fans surrounded me until the last possible moment before "Action"; ice packs on my temples and my wrists. Each take only lasted until the precise moment that sweat broke in cascades down my face. Thoughtfully he never asked me to get fully dressed until he was totally ready to shoot!

If cinema is to be considered a fine art, then it is people such as Manikda (the name given to him by his crew, meaning 'brother jewel' in Bengali) who make that possible. It is indeed his name that is writ large on every frame of his films. He is in absolute control of his work: writer, director, editor, composer, camera operator and to all intents and purposes lighting cameraman and production designer as well, for every minute detail in these areas falls directly under his vigilant eye. His attention to detail is extraordinarily painstaking: he would often take an hour or more to finalise the symmetry of myriad different elements on a desk top. However, what was so remarkable was the fact that it never looked overstudied – nothing in his films ever did.

The direction of his players on the set was limited in large measure to his technical requirements, since his choice of actor and initial discussion of characterisation were meticulous in the extreme. Unquestionably the final result was his and his alone. All created with a single-minded determination which was only superficially dissembled by that smile.

Like those few other giants whose names have become synonymous with cinema, he granted our industry its art form, but, he did more – he extended it into a world far removed from Europe and the west coast of America.



Ashani Sanket (1973)



EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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JOHN HUSTON

Don't let the Film Festival pass you by this year. Many of the films we will present will be UK premieres, many may NEVER be screened in Edinburgh again, film makers from all over the world will be here to talk to YOU about their work, stars from the biggest and best new films will also be here to add a bit of glitz!

OPENING GALA EXTRAVAGANZA 15 August

STRICTLY BALLROOM

by Baz Luhrmann

'Edinburgh has pulled off a real coup by grabbing the UK premiere of the "hottest film at Cannes this year"'

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

The biggest, brightest night of the Film Festival. A UK premiere with film makers and stars.

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The Film Festival will open on the afternoon of Saturday 15 August with a special gala screening for young people.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FILM FESTIVAL

Some of the most exciting cinema to emerge recently has been for young audiences. We will feature films for every age group, from the very young to teenagers.

SAM FULLER'S ONE MAN SHOW

A Hollywood giant returns to Edinburgh to discuss his life and work live on stage.

MASTERCLASSES SPONSORED BY BBC2

A chance to hear about lives spent in the film industry. Aspiring film maker or keen enthusiast, these sessions are informal, fun and fascinating! How did Freddie Francis shoot CAPE FEAR, how did Patrick Doyle go about writing the music for DEAD AGAIN and HENRY V? Find out and ask your own questions too!

STATE OF INDEPENDENTS

The talking point of this year's Cannes Film Festival, an exciting range of new work from American film makers with energy and 'attitude' including BOB ROBERTS, SWOON, RESERVOIR DOGS, and MAC.

HANS JÜRGEN SYBERBERG

Masterworks of myth and kitsch. A chance to see the work of one of Germany's most controversial film makers whose work offers an often unsettling, fantastical exploration of his nation's past.

Syberberg himself will also be here to discuss his work.

ANIMATION

Retrospectives of Oscar winning Aardman, Polish animator Dumala who will be here, a selection of work from the National Film Board of Canada presented by Wendy Tilby and the very best of British Animation will compete for The Post Office McLaren Award.

NEW BRITISH CINEMA

A range of dynamic, innovative work, more often than not from new directors, proves that, against the odds, British film makers are alive and kicking.

ALAN SHARP

The man from Greenock, otherwise known as one of Hollywood's best screenwriters, will be here to present a retrospective of his work and talk about the inspiration behind such movies as THE LAST RUN, ULZANA'S RAID, BILLY TWO HATS and NIGHT MOVES.

YOUNG FILM MAKERS

Edinburgh is rapidly earning a reputation for showcasing the best new work from student film makers from all over the world. The film makers themselves will be here, and generally contributing to the buzz that makes Edinburgh so special.

For full programme details, look out for your copy of our programme in THE LIST on July 16th (contains priority booking form), TICKETS ON SALE FROM FILMHOUSE & THE FRINGE OFFICE FROM 1st AUGUST.

INFORMATION 031-228 4051

Curious tears

Jenny Diski

The nice folks of Bedford Falls are singing 'Auld Lang Syne', the credits are rolling, and, once again, the tears are streaming down my cheeks. On the other sofa, fifteen-year-old Clo is watching me with her head slightly to one side like a curious bird. "You're crying", she says, accusingly. I know she's wondering, as Potter, the wicked capitalist in *It's a Wonderful Life*, did of George Bailey, are you one of those starry-eyed dreamers, a believer in all that sentimental hogwash?

What me? Starry-eyed? Sentimental? Dreamer? No – three times over, resoundingly – not me! I'm one of those unblinking realists. Face me with reality, and I look long and hard at it, and the more I don't like it (and mostly I don't), the less I'll blink.

But I don't know how to explain, either to myself, or to my daughter, why it is I weep every time Clarence, angel second-class, shows George that his life has made a difference to the nice people of Bedford Falls. Or why the same thing happens to me watching *Lady for a Day*, when Apple Annie, panhandler and drunk, is transformed into a society hostess to sustain her daughter's misconceptions, by Dave duh Dooke. Or again, when the hero of *Meet John Doe* reads the radio speech that's been written for him about the importance of the 'little people', and starts to believe it.

Curious about those tears, I'd been trying to watch *It's a Wonderful Life* again, but Clo always vetoed it, because it wasn't Christmas. Luckily, the Capra Collection has just been released on video, and, since it counts as work, I was allowed another viewing, out of season.

Videos are a blessing to the secretly sentimental like myself, who want to keep the weeping private. At home, unlike in the cinema where the lights come up just after the crying hits so that you have to face the world puffy-eyed and mucousy, you can let the tears roll freely and blow your nose into an entire boxful of paper hankies. Only the sharp eyes of a semi-cynical adolescent have to be faced, and that, I suppose, is the price you pay for populating the world.

Time is also an able assistant in the crying department. I wonder, if they could wipe time from old movies (in the guise of the quality of the print, in the softened lighting tones, in the almost physically distant, crackling soundtrack), like they do when re-mastering old recordings on to CDs, if their power wouldn't lessen. Billie Holiday, without the cratered sound of the decades, is stunning, but I always have a sense that something's been lost in the cleaning. The distance between me and a movie is part of the experience of watching, and, paradoxically, perhaps the silvery blur has the same effect as the grey hair and wrinkles of an aged head and face, allowing us to trust the story to the storyteller.

Which is why, I suppose, re-makes so rarely work. Isn't the power of *Casablanca*, or *Les Enfants du Paradis* something to do with feeling, in the print itself, the times in which they were made? The sharp tones



A dark world: James Stewart and the Angel in Frank Capra's 'It's a Wonderful Life'

and perfect focus of modern popular movies – *Lethal Weapon 3* for instance, or *Batman Returns* – speak directly to us about quantities of dollars, and techno-wizardry. They are certainly of their time, but trust them? How could we, they are not speaking to us. They don't call. The voice gets lost in their shiny brightness.

In a tribute at the beginning of one of the videos, Frank Capra Jr explains that his father's art was all about his "love of ordinary, common people". Now it's true that it's the John Does and George Baileys of this world – hoboes, small-town idealists, panhandlers and hustlers – who are the heroes of Capra's movies, but the heartbeat of each movie is the despair that each of them feels about society and their lives. Apple Annie, John Doe and George Bailey all contemplate suicide but are saved at the last moment, not by a faith in life, but by fairy tales and miraculous interventions. Capra may have loved people, but people aren't the subject of his films; *America* is.

Capra's *America* is not that geographical landmass just above Mexico, but a mythological place in the geography of the mind, whose boundary fences are flyposted with copies of the American Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg address. Inside its borders, great battles are fought between the forces of good and evil, for magical though it may be, it is a land where economic depression and spiritual destitution are rife. The bad guys are capitalists, self-seeking bureaucrats and totalitarians (Henry Potter, the Police Commissioner, D. B. Norton), but they are invariably beaten by democracy, which is to say, the decent, right-thinking will of the people, even if it does need a shove or two from

someone quoting the seminal literature to remind them that they hold the safety of the world in their hands.

Capra's *America* (the diametrical opposite of Kafka's *Amerika*) is the place where tough-as-old-boots realists like myself can howl. It's a small compartment of the mind that retains unassailable notions of honesty, decency, goodness, fairness, and *how things ought to be*. They've been there forever, since they are fine ideas and proper ideals for social animals to possess, but they live, concealed for safety, behind a thicket of *realpolitik*; the world as she has to be lived; people as they have to be experienced.

With the aid of shadows on the silver screen, Capra describes the outline of his *America* and superimposes it on our own. The fit is simple and perfect: Potter has a bust of Napoleon in his office, George has a painting of Abe Lincoln in his; John Doe's raincoat is always wet and open, D. B. Norton's has a fur collar and is buttoned up.

But Capra is *not* an escapist. I've never understood how *It's a Wonderful Life* is seen as a beacon of Christmas hope. It's one of the darkest films I know. George Bailey's lifelong struggle is to come to terms with disappointment, with a hatful of dreams that never come true. He never gets away from small-town America (a fantasy within a fantasy), he never builds his bridges and towers. He's trapped into his destiny by the needs of others: he doesn't want to run Building and Loan when his father dies, he doesn't want to love Mary and be tied down forever. But he does both, watching his dreams shrivel as the decades pass and ordinary, pleasant enough life goes on, until, as if his good nature and sense of duty counted for zero, everything comes crashing to the ground, thanks to nothing more than mere accident. Having sacrificed everything he has longed for, he is about to become destitute and probably imprisoned as well. He comes to the conclusion, not unreasonably, that it would have been better if he'd never been born. "That's what you get for praying for help", he says, black and bitter. A nice family film, huh?

Under the circumstances, I tell myself and Clo, I'm perfectly entitled to weep, because things are not how they should be, and worse than that, they won't ever be. It doesn't mean I'm not a realist, it means I am, but I'm sorry for how things are. Isn't that a thing to cry about?

"If you want a simple place where people are nice, and help each other, why don't you go and live in Dunmanway?", Clo suggests, ever practical (think rural Ireland, donkeys, no electricity and happy holidays). "I don't want to live in Dunmanway", I wail, hiccupping back the tears. "I want to live in the centre of London, where the air is poisoned, and bombs go off, and people sleep in doorways, and where fossil fuels are being exhausted just so that I can watch Frank Capra movies on the VCR, and remind myself of the way things aren't".

And the funny thing is, Clo nods her understanding at me and gives a little smile. I suppose she must have *America* in her head, too.

'I've never understood how "It's a Wonderful Life" is seen as a beacon of Christmas hope. It's one of the darkest films I know'

Memories of the future

My obsession is with the representation of voices. *Vote-Vérité*, if you like: VV. Long ago I started with a perception of film culture which could be charitably rated at zero and was not much elevated by three decades of self-incarceration in the regional outback of the BBC. Perhaps there's a contradiction there somewhere, and it might be this. To follow the mythic precepts of the corporation and swim to the centre meant you could climb the dark tower and enter the debate, which was not a debate since it excluded the audience. But if you manifested a greater interest in the people you were supposed to be serving, those who surrounded you closely, in any region, then you would be excluded from the great game and thereafter be at the mercy of the powerful centre. The only way this painful issue could be resolved, it seemed, was to draw on the 'genius of the place' – and resist. VV was my secret weapon in decades of dissidence.

Before film even dawned on our broadcasting world, there was radio and its new technology: the tape-recorder. Magnetic recording was invented in Denmark in 1898; perfected in Germany in 1940; first used in Britain in 1950; in Birmingham in 1954.

The EMI Midget: a dark-green box holding valves, amplifier and ten U2 batteries. Heavy on the shoulder, but totally liberating in practice, since no sound recordist came with it. For the first time, technically illiterate producers could go out – to the horror of the engineering department – and record endless contributions for programmes by establishing relationships in the world beyond.

Hands at work

After a stumbling start, Denis Mitchell in the North Region and we in Midland were soon creating sound documentary on tape. With brass scissors and mag solvent, like Eisenstein, we discovered montage of a sort. Sound montage: VV. And in 1958 we cut Birmingham's first film documentary. Half the voices and effects were recorded on quarter-inch tape, edited by stopwatch and transferred to 35mm filmstock for dubbing. Unorthodox, but easy.

Almost from that moment I started to realise that the key to radical documentary was in the juxtaposition of the visible with the lyrical complexity offered by our DIY technology. Grierson had said it already, over and over, but none of us in Birmingham knew that. The difference between us and the old documentary people was that we lived with it: 'industrial Britain' was all around us; at the heart of the techniques were the voices of the people 'out there' – Mitchell's croppies, crooks, down-and-outs and eccentric charmers in Manchester and London, our industrial groups around the country. But no one could have said these films were just radio with pictures. Alongside VV was the visible – always. To put a frame round a fragment of life, to follow movement, faces and hands at work – it was intoxicating. It gave an unhesitating direction to the exploration.

The work was still using commentary, though. Using it in odd ways in order to

Television film-maker Philip Donnellan remembers decades of dissidence within the BBC, the EMI Midget and his obsession with the silenced voices of Britain

assess alternatives. In 1959 the dramatic core of an almost neo-realist film about Stoke-on-Trent, *The White Country*, was an old pottery worker trying to answer a letter from a friend who had emigrated thirty years past and was now sending his son back from America. His three dialectical answers gave structural form to the film: "It's still just the same..." / "it's changed but..." / "its future must go our way". A draft was done after talking in depth to Albert Goodwin on tape. Then we worked together on it to ensure he could say what he wanted in ways that could interlock with my romantic footage. I recorded him on the Midget at home and transferred it to filmstock for editing.

Later, for a film about the steel town of Corby, a young metallurgist recorded the first-person narrative created in the same way. It was enough then for commentary's dominant voice to come from a participant articulating ideas from an insider position in the community. It was a limited change, and the control stayed with us, of course. It was the producer (me) who framed the film around the Corby Burns Club's annual supper, shot as it took place: a nightmare task with the BBC's dreadful 35mm double camera...

By this time the centre had claimed me, though not for long. My radio colleague in Birmingham, Charles Parker, was into his radio-ballad phase with MacColl.

Their technique of song/speech interplay became the soundtrack form in the next film, about a Sunderland shipyard. Now we were in 16mm and this gave us the freedom to film synchronised interchanges from men laying a keel to a launch that we intercut with adapted folk song. The head of department, Grace Wyndham Goldie, hated it, but Stuart Hood, programme controller, put it out unchanged. It was the first skirmish in the ideological war: others followed.

The industrial films were scrapped – hostage to Grace's goodwill – but in an innocuous series about world-leaders, I smuggled through (with Huw Wheldon's connivance) a survey of the Brits in India over three centuries. No history lesson with a schoolmaster commentary, but the voices of long-dead men and women

describing their lives: "It was all duty and red tape, tempered by picnics and adultery".

This time the VV came from radio actors, but their trained voices articulating clearly into a microphone could not match for a moment the power of past and present images on film and still. There had to be another way. If poetic reality in whatever form was going to hit the glass screen, there would have to be new sources of inspiration to build the impact.

Actuality on film – talking heads – was one way and so (back in the Midlands by now) the Caribbean people of Handsworth spoke for themselves in *Colony*. Tentatively at first we started to stretch the distance between picture and soundtrack into a positive counterpoint. The Lord Mayor of Birmingham in ermine and ruffles processes to his Rolls as we hear a West Indian bubbling with laughter describe how Septimus Severus, Roman governor of Britain and a full-blooded African negro, defended England against the Scots when "they useta break over and beat hell outa you cats..."; a woman recalls her yard in Jamaica against film of our grey February houses "...oranges, ginger, everyone grow chicken".

The voices of the ignored: black people, teenage dropouts in Sheffield, a Durham mining family, Irishmen digging the Victoria Line, the enclosed world of the blind. These were not popular: almost all were attacked, some refused transmission. It was a small war: an administrative ambush here, a set-piece blast from vested interests there, sniping from behind books of rules. But now and again there were peacekeepers with white flags: Swallow, Attenborough, Wheldon, Scott.

Potential poetry

We had our rules too: record all your research encounters, always go to the people who know the score, always lead with the Voices. We were obsessed with finding new ways of presenting the marvellous and sapient insights of Britain and Ireland, new frameworks of picture/sound counterpoint. I still am, alas.

At the end of the 60s, Parker, a noble ally, came up with a revolutionary idea. In a short programme on children's employment in 1842 he went back to the villages where the little witnesses had lived and recorded today's eleven-year-olds reading their evidence from the report. From this technique came the power of *Long March of Everyman* in radio, and came my Birmingham films *Passage West* on nineteenth-century emigration; *Pure Radio* about the BBC department that had inspired it all; *Before the Mast* on Victorian sailors; *Gone for a Soldier* about the British Army 1815-1981.

Given these origins, perhaps it's only fair to give the last word to Parker himself: "...the use of such language (and all that goes with it visually as well as aurally) involves much more than the use of wild track and the developed dialectic between soundtrack and picture. It requires a belief in the existence of this potential poetry and its recognition and extension when found".

The roving reporter: thanks to the EMI Midget



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In a recent article in *Film Comment*, Richard Schickel reflected on the difficult task of compiling a visual tribute to Satyajit Ray for the honorary Oscar. Not only did Schickel fail to locate any prints of Ray's films in the US, but he also found that his generation of cinephiles (who had grown up in the 50s and 60s) was the last for whom a foreign-language auteur meant anything. Schickel laments that "young people today" – even those on advanced film courses – have no handle on past film culture. A friend who taught in the US similarly informs me that most budding directors now take Scorsese's *GoodFellas* as their reference point. Yet Scorsese would be the first to pay tribute to the wealth of international cinema which he has enjoyed, studied and been influenced by (and significantly, Scorsese was a vigorous campaigner for Ray's valedictory award).

I can't count myself among Schickel's generation, as my own voyage beyond the contemporary Hollywood star system began in the 70s. But even then, though the great wave of European energy seemed to be ebbing, it was still possible through film societies and repertory cinemas to discover what the excitement above the subtitles was about. My need to read up on the subject followed a parallel path, for though many of the key books on the great auteurs were just out of print, they could still be dug out in remainder bookshops. Even the titles the publishers gave those series – Secker and Warburg's 'Cinema One' and 'Cinema Two', Studio Vista's 'Movie Paperbacks' – now seem musty with nostalgia. We're older and wiser these days about the extent to which one individual is capable of controlling this most collaborative (and interfered with) of art forms. But those detailed and enthusiastic title-by-title journeys through a career offered an invaluable perspective.

These reflections were inescapable in the face of the new BFI Classics series – "books to honour the great films of world cinema". Each svelte volume will cover a classic title from the National Film Archive's list of 360 'key films', perfect prints of which are to be shown continually at the Museum of the Moving Image, confounding the accusation that archives exist to hide away their treasures (of course, only Londoners will benefit, but that's another thorny issue). The British Film Institute will publish an accompanying monograph giving full credits, historical background and a personal view on why the film is a 'classic'. Access to the perfect print means that high-quality stills can be used to illustrate the text.

The star item of the first batch is Salman

Rushdie's account of the 1939 *The Wizard of Oz*, the film that inspired him to be a novelist. We hardly need another book on this particular movie, but Rushdie has produced a witty and flamboyant tribute, throwing in a speculative flight of fiction about the auction of those ruby slippers. No expense has been spared the celebrity writer – there are beautiful colour stills which you wouldn't get for your £5.95 were it not for a generous slice of subsidy. Rushdie's gently subversive observations include seeing the Wicked Witch of the East as a potential benevolent dictator and her sister from the West as a more positive image of womanhood than the simpering Glinda ("Frilly pink versus slimline black. No contest"). He eloquently disputes the film's catchphrase "No place like home" as denying its true theme of escape from the inadequacies of adults to discover one's own adulthood. He doesn't explain the film's enduring camp appeal – but perhaps there is no more to be said on that subject.

The other volumes in the series are less showy. Richard Schickel gives a detailed and informative account of the gestation of *Double Indemnity*, as well as highlighting its innovative qualities. Penelope Houston's verdict that *Went the Day Well?* is "not a film of any striking depth of subtlety" may not promise much, but her investigation into the origins of Cavalcanti's wartime drama helps explain the lasting fascination of this black sheep on Ealing Common. Edward Buscombe's scene-by-scene breakdown of John Ford's *Stagecoach* goes a long way towards elucidating why this film, dubbed a 'classic' by its makers before a frame was shot, has earned its status. As with Rushdie, there is no question of the authors' enthusiasm for their subject, nor of their willingness to buckle down to some valuable research.

The intriguing line-up of forthcoming marriages between author and film includes Alan Parker on *Some Like it Hot*, Lindsay Anderson on *Fires were Started*, Andi Engel on *Tokyo Story*, Marina Warner on *L'Atalante*, Melvyn Bragg on *The Seventh Seal*, Jeremy Isaacs on *A Night at the Opera* and John Boorman on *Empire of the Senses*. Not to mention a host of names with more scholarly qualifications, if less obviously 'sexy' selling qualities.

Without denying the pleasure many of these books will give, one wonders how future generations will use them. It's rather like producing a pocket book devoted to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony while a critical assessment of his entire *oeuvre* languishes, only obtainable by special request, in the back room of a library. Browsing today through a large bookshop with a decent film section, a hungry student would be hard-pressed to find a comprehensive volume on, say, Buñuel, Renoir, Bergman, Bresson, Pasolini or Vigo. As the number of prints available to cinemas continues to diminish, and foreign-language films screened on television are increasingly marginalised, the ephemeral nature of the medium becomes tragically more apparent.

I am glad not to be one of those weaned on a future where only 'classics' survive, selected by the tastes of the 90s from an art form only just approaching its centenary. I hope this project, reductive by necessity and choice, is not the only shape of things to come – at least in print.

Dressed to thrill

Lorraine Gamman

Vested Interests:

Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety

Marjorie Garber, Routledge, £25, 443pp

"Honey, you're born naked – the rest is all drag", commented gender-bender Rupaul Charles about the relationship of clothes to sexuality. But the idea that gender is constructed by what you wear and located between your ears rather than your legs is not widely accepted. Even in these cynical days, gender 'transgressions' are still able to shock. Perhaps not on certain street corners, or in London clubs such as Kinky Gerlinky's, where playful drag is back in vogue, but I suspect my local bank manager would not go unnoticed if she turned up for work in full masculine attire.

The potential of cross-dressing, transvestism and even transsexuality as strategies of disruption or resistance has not until recently come in for much critical scrutiny. There are some feminist books about the subject, but one of the chief contributions made by Marjorie Garber's new volume is its discussion of these practices in terms of *representation* as well as in terms of lifestyle. *Vested Interests* investigates the meaning of cross-dressing as performance, not only in various social milieux (lesbian dress codes in 20s Paris, for instance) but also in the context of its origins in the theatre and how it has subsequently been mobilised by actors and pop stars in film, television and pop videos, where 'voguing' is now prominent.

One problem with Garber's approach, which covers everything from female actors playing Peter Pan to Dustin Hoffman as Tootsie, is the status of her readings of the films or images she considers. The interpretations and pleasures she argues for would not necessarily be shared by other readers, who might decode them differently. This 'fixing' of meaning may be a consequence of the fact that the real project of Garber's book is less an interrogation of visual images than a reformulation of the significance of the transvestite as sign. Her thesis is that the transvestite is not only transgressive in specific contexts, but instigates "a crisis of category itself". It is a strength of the book that she sees male as well as female transvestites as active protagonists in this scenario, and that she recognises the radical potential of cross-dressing – a recognition lacking in much medical and psychiatric discussion.

Underlying *Vested Interests* is the idea that transvestism represents a 'third', transgender term. Garber argues that transvestism destabilises boundaries, "not only male and female but also gay and straight and sex and gender. This is the sense – the radical sense – in which transvestism is a third term". But how is transvestism transgressive? And what is it a third term of? Garber never really explains this, or counters claims that transvestism in fact legitimates rather than challenges existing male/female categories.

The argument about containment versus transgression requires a greater consideration of historical context than Garber's book delivers. For instance, Boy George gender bending on a pop video today does not



John Wayne in John Ford's 'Stagecoach' – dubbed a 'classic' by its makers before a frame was shot, above Opposite: The awakening and dance of the Tin Man. Judy Garland and Ray Bolger oil the rusty Jack Haley in Victor Fleming's 1939 classic 'The Wizard of Oz'



have the same radical meaning as it might have had ten years ago. But Garber is unable to acknowledge shifts brought about by the passage of time, perhaps because she overstates her case about transvestism's intrinsic meaning. Also, by dismantling the distinction between the 'cross-dresser' and 'transvestite' (which are different in psychoanalytic literature), she sidesteps the erotic and fetishistic pleasures clothes may offer. Some people literally orgasm over clothes of the opposite sex, but Garber's model cannot give a reason why.

Despite these problems, Garber's book is both useful and challenging. Her writing style is accessible, and her attempt to redefine ideas about the instability of the identities we all take for granted is provocative. Overall, *Vested Interests* provides a sophisticated analysis of the importance of clothes in marking gender boundaries. I may not agree with Garber on everything (I would contest her readings of Liberace and Elvis and her treatment of the issue of race), but nevertheless I wholeheartedly recommend the book.

A long goodbye

Paul Kerr

Robert Altman's America

Helene Keyssar, OUP, £14.95, 352pp

A new book about Robert Altman appears just as he's acclaimed Best Director in Cannes – film publishing and movies are rarely this fortuitously in synch. However, until his latest film, *The Player*, Altman had been all but forgotten, both critically and commercially. And this pre-*Player* book – like pre-*Player* Altman – is now a virtual anachronism. Despite being relatively up-to-date in chronicling Altman's career (to *Tanner '88*), Keyssar's approach, which consists of conventional – if not unpersuasive – readings of selected films from 1968 to 1988, remains strangely time-warped. She sees Altman's work as carnivalesque (*à la* Bakhtin) and proto-feminist. Otherwise, there is little new.

An auteur study of Altman is a curious project, since it has always been his ambition to transform Hollywood's hierarchical mode of production. Keyssar regards him as "a character in a deconstructionist's dream", pointing to his collaborative methods, the allegedly "non-judgmental", "democratic" use of multiple voices (and multi-track sound) and "promiscuous camera", and his facility in moving between different media. But having dreamt this deconstruction, she promptly forgets it and views the films entirely through the director's lens, counting the thematic and stylistic unities with barely a reference to the cinematic or industrial – let alone wider – contexts in which they were both produced and consumed.

Yet even the most cursory look at Altman's career begs the question of what caused his late 70s/early 80s critical and commercial decline. Keyssar ducks the issue, partly because she rejects the wholesale critical disparagement that greeted much of his 80s output, and partly because she began the book in 1976 – just as the consensus around *Nashville* had consolidated into an adula-



Dressing the part:
Dustin Hoffman goes to work
as 'Dorothy Michaels' in
Sydney Pollack's *'Tootsie'*

tion which neither she, nor, more damagingly, Altman himself, was able or willing to ignore.

The closest Keyssar gets to an explanation is that "in Altman's movies of the 70s, Americans' propensity for theatricality was often an object for reflection. In the 80s, when theater took over the White House, it had to become the medium and the message had to become more subtle". (Theatre is Keyssar's background and she's good at unpicking the performance element in/of the director's work.) Patrick McGilligan's 1989 book on Altman, *Jumping Off the Cliff*, which Keyssar refers to as "gossip", falls back on biographical reasons (drugs, alcohol, Altman's wild man of Hollywood persona). But it also charts the collapse of the collaborative circle after *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*, adding that Altman had alienated both studios and unions and was – like Keyssar – beginning to believe his own publicity. From being on-the-ball and on-the-money in the early 70s, he went rapidly out-of-synch with studios and critics alike later in that decade.

The late 70s were crucial in another way. They saw the transformation of the Movie Brats (with whom Altman had shared a US art cinema reputation) into high-concept, high-budget, blockbuster film-makers, and – at the other end of Hollywood's economy/ecology – the advent of cable and video. During the 80s, the new media were to be a lifeline for an otherwise unemployable Altman, but they were also the death of the most cinematic of his pre-80s work, which is virtually impossible to view on the small screen.

Ironically, Altman's response to these changes was the 'television' serial *Tanner '88* – his favourite work, and Keyssar is good at explaining why. Without *Tanner '88* and its combination of actual and fictional characters, *The Player* would not exist. Let's hope the latter's success – and this book's refusal to remythologise its director as a player himself – will discourage Altman and his new playmates from screwing up again.

Magnificent obsessives

Suzanne Moore

The Adoring Audience:

Fan Culture and Popular Media

Lisa A. Lewis (ed), Routledge,
£10.99, 245pp

Popular images of the fan range from the lone obsessive who stalks – and sometimes kills – the stars, to the teenage girl overcome by mob hysteria. Fans are mad, bad and dangerous to know. Even worse, they demonstrate little cultural discrimination in their devotion to the low spots of popular culture – the likes of Shakin' Stevens, Barry Manilow and *Starsky and Hutch*. In short, they are other people, not us.

Fans have been ignored in many of the debates about consumption that preoccupied media studies during the 80s. Nevertheless, they share with many academics an almost pathological fixation on texts and images and a complete disregard for the context of the audience's relationship to the culture industries. The essays in *The Adoring Audience* attempt to examine the phenom-

non of the fan, drawing on diverse material, from Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital to the Trekkies' fanzines.

The figure of the fan emerges, rehabilitated by jargon, as a proto-deconstructionist desperately attempting to regain control in an all-consuming celebrity culture. These new readings of fandom are essentially positive, celebrating the creativity of the fans and evoking the intense pleasures of popular culture. Fans are no longer seen as deviant, socially inadequate losers but as being in the business of "semiotic productivity", makers of subversive textual strategies and bearers of an "affective sensibility".

However, the desiccated language used to elevate the fan to the level of resistance-fighter adds little to our overall understanding and by far the best pieces in this collection are those in which the voices of the fans themselves are heard. Their vitality, self-awareness and complete contrariness shine through in essays such as Ehrenreich, Hess and Jacobs' on Beatlemania, which identifies in the screaming abandonment of the girl fans the seeds of rebellion that would contribute to the sexual revolution five years later. Cheryl Cline's wonderful articles from *Bitch* wittily explore what any amount of wittering on about enunciative production cannot – that she's got it bad for David Lee Roth; that being a fan is about lust, but is not simply about sex. And that fans are not the same as groupies. By talking about what it is to be a female fan, she makes connections between gender, fantasy and power. After all, to be a fan is widely perceived as a feminising experience.

No one, though, has mined this territory with more genuinely shocking results than the Vermorels, who have collected and published fan letters in their book *Starlust*, some of which are included in *The Adoring Audience*. Read in the cold light of day, these letters disrupt almost any theory you care to invent. The Vermorels do not pass judgment, choosing simply to display the letters in all their excessiveness. Are they a sign of consumption turning in on itself? When a fan like Mollie writes a crazy word salad to Bowie: "To set this dirtiness a Dead David this dirty love murder kill me all my hair is standing up when will I finish this hell", one can only shudder. Is this woman waving or drowning? Fans may confuse the two, but then these days, who doesn't?

A woman's place

Sheila Whitaker

Women and the New German Cinema

Julia Knight, Verso, £32.95, 221pp

As Julia Knight cogently points out, the absence of opportunity for (well-qualified) women directors to make features in the early years of the 'New German Cinema' movement is matched in its effrontery only by the subsequent failure of the critical world to consider their work as fundamental to the movement. In the opening chapters of this book, Knight outlines the financial infrastructures and social/critical prejudices which militated against feature films by women. Her description of the critical environment into which their films fell makes for interesting, if depressing, reading, particularly her discussion of the appropriation of auteur theory by both crit-

Jeff Goldblum as the Tricycle man in Altman's *'Nashville'*



ics and (male) film-makers, who designated their films 'Autorenkino'. This notion subsequently "...informed the institutional framework of the first film subsidy agency, the Kuratorium junger deutscher Film... Therefore, not only did the new [male] directors conceive of themselves as Autoren, this self-designation was also officially sanctioned". Indeed, the public statements of Kluge, Fassbinder *et al* were such that "by the time the New German Cinema started attracting critical attention in Britain and the US, a conceptual and institutional framework was already in place which located and promoted it as a cinema of [male] personal expression".

This was the situation in which women film-makers had to struggle. In the early days women were denied support for their fiction projects and so worked mainly in documentary, where their lack of auteur status continued into their later feature film-making careers. Add to this the fact that although "...feminism is obviously an important context, the term has been used virtually to subsume all women's film-making in West Germany", so denying female directors an individual response to their work. The injustice in the way films by women have been received has been detrimental not only to the film-makers, but to film studies and audiences too.

The later chapters of Knight's book disappoint. Her attempts to define a women's aesthetic through a reading of some films is not entirely successful. Her chapter on the 80s is insubstantial and her critical arguments fail to meet the challenge of the earlier section. Certain films are casually dismissed, notably the later, less successful work of Margaretha von Trotta, which nevertheless offers to some degree the women's aesthetic for which Knight argues. This is more than can be said for Dorris Dörrie's *Men*, which does not pose the same kind of challenge. For Knight to state that "it is by contrast an amusing send-up of very familiar male behaviour", as if this were merit enough, is extraordinary.

Issue must also be taken with the incomplete filmographies and failure to identify documentaries from features, a crucial point for readers in relation to the arguments Knight makes.

Painful pleasures

Linda Ruth Williams

Men, Women, and Chain Saws:

Gender in the Modern Horror Film

Carol J. Clover, BFI Publishing, £15.95, 260pp

The image of the beleaguered heroine in the final scene of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre Part 2* victoriously waving her appropriated weapon above her head appears more feminist than one might expect from a genre often accused of glaring sexism. While this 'Final Girl' and her sisters (those like *Alien's* Ripley, *Halloween's* Laurie, and *A Nightmare on Elm Street's* Nancy who are left alive – and armed – at the end) are, of course, preceded by hordes of female victims, according to Carol J. Clover, the pleasures of horror are not as straightforwardly sadistic as feminists, and others, have argued. "What film-makers seem to know better than film critics is that gender is

less a wall than a permeable membrane", writes Clover in this brilliant analysis of gender and its disturbances in modern horror films.

This book is a lively celebration of low-budget horror movies, identified here as the stronger, underground ancestors of those up-market successes which Clover calls "slasher movies for yuppies". *The Silence of the Lambs'* Buffalo Bill owes much to the less glamorised Leatherface of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, for example, while Abel Ferrara's remarkable *Ms 45* is a more honest version of the 'safe' rape-revenge movie *Thelma & Louise*. More controversially, *I Spit on Your Grave* (most infamous of the so-called 'video nasties') is termed "the repressed of *The Accused*".

Bubbling away beneath Clover's multifaceted readings of slasher, occult and rape-revenge films is the question of what the viewer gets out of them. The conventional notion of the pleasure offered by horror has adolescent boys enjoying the spectacle of female victimisation by monsters of machismo. But if that spectacle is sometimes denied the viewer, then so too is any simple enjoyment. In fact, a complex set of cross-identifications takes place in the splatter-fest auditorium, and Clover's analysis spills over into a wider exploration of sexual difference. If viewers identify with the soon to be castrated/dispatched monster, then what happens when the monster turns victim, assaulted by the Final Girl's weapon? If we identify with the female 'victim-hero', do we feel her violation, as well as her victory? As Clover puts it, we are both Red Riding Hood and the Wolf.

Clover's argument does not, however, rest on a straightforward reversal of terms. Claims have been made for the existence of a sub-genre of 'feminist' slasher movies, to which might belong the camp, comic gems *Hollywood Chain Saw Hookers* and *Scumbusters*, or the darker *Witch Who Came from the Sea* (not mentioned in this book). Clover, however, argues that most horror films are obsessed with feminism, playing out plots which climax with an image of (masculinised) female power and offering visual pleasures which are organised not around a mastering gaze, but around a more radical 'victim-identified' look. This brings the masochism of the audience to the fore: the figure of Mark Lewis in Powell's *Peeping Tom* (who looks with the eyes of both victim and murderer) exemplifies the ambivalent identifications at work in horror.

Clover's book challenges not just the idea of a male sadism which finds satisfaction in female victimisation, but the entire theoretical perspective on which it rests: the model of the male gaze which voyeuristically objectifies the spectacle of powerless women. The twisted process which allows the audience to "cheer the killer on as he assaults his victims, then reverse their sympathies to cheer the survivor on as she assaults the killer" – or, conversely, to feel victimised with her and then later with him – is inevitably subject to the final truth that the bearer of the gaze is doomed. *Men, Women and Chain Saws* asks what is going on when we look at films in which the look itself (as a metaphor for killing, filming and fucking) is the channel for pain, not power? As the sign caught by the panning camera at the start of *The Silence of the Lambs* exhorts us: "Hurt, Agony, Pain – Love It".

Me: Stories of My Life

Katharine Hepburn, Penguin Books, £4.99, 336pp

● Hepburn writes conversationally about her life, her career and her 'beaux', talking directly to the reader with candour and affection about her unconventional relationships, especially her twenty-seven-year long liaison with the already-married Spencer Tracy. Anecdotal information on her film and theatre career punctuates the narrative.

A Modest Pageant: Children, Madonna & Child, Death & Transfiguration, Distant Voices, Still Lives, The Long Day Closes

Terence Davies, Faber & Faber, £8.99, 189pp

● The five Terence Davies screenplays to date, including the award-winning 'trilogy' works plus the two more recent feature film scripts. In his brief introduction, Davies talks about his unorthodox film-making style and the importance of early influences: Catholicism, music and song, American movies and, most of all, his relationship with his mother.

The Hollywood Story: Everything you ever wanted to know about the American Movie Business

Joel W. Finler, Mandarin, £9.99, 565pp

● Winner of the BFI Award for most outstanding film book in 1989 and now updated for the paperback release. A fact-packed volume of information about the major Hollywood studios including details of releases, awards, stars and finances with a sprinkling of gossip and some useful lists. Finler has reorganised his material under individual studio chapters and made extensive revisions to the discussion of technological developments in the 50s and 60s.

Casablanca: Script and Legend:

The Fiftieth Anniversary Edition

Howard Koch, Aurum Press, £12.95, 279pp

● When the BFI asked its membership to nominate their favourite film of all time, the unanimous choice was *Casablanca*. This volume, one of several celebrating *Casablanca's* fiftieth anniversary, comprises the screenplay (co-written by Koch), preceded by Koch's essay on the making of the film. Six short valedictory pieces follow including contributions from Umberto Eco and J. Hoberman and concluding with two of the original reviews.

The Incredible World of 007:

An Authorised Celebration of James Bond

Philip Lisa and Lee Pfeiffer, Bantam, £15.99, 224pp

● Glossy volume surveying the Bond phenomenon in cheerful, chatty prose including a chronological survey of all the films and the four Bond actors. Plus lists of Oscar nominations, major locations, most memorable gadgets and other paraphernalia, with interviews and many pictures.

Guillotine: Its Legend and Lore

Daniel Gerould, Blast Books, £10.95, 330pp

● A detailed and thorough study of execution, French style. References to films as diverse as Becker's 1952 *Golden Marie*, the 1966 'Carry On' tribute *Don't Lose Your Head* and Wajda's 1983 *Danton* are interspersed with descriptions of novels, plays and paintings. These together with eye-witness and historical accounts all testify to the power of the guillotine as a symbol of French political culture.

Violated or victorious?

Marilyn Burns in

Tobe Hooper's 'The Texas Chainsaw Massacre'



REVIEWS

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films and new British TV films

Alien³

USA 1992

Director: David Fincher

Certificate
18

Distributor
20th Century Fox

Production Company
20th Century Fox

Executive Producer
Ezra Swerdlow

Producers
Gordon Carroll
David Giler
Walter Hill

Co-producer
Sigourney Weaver

Production Supervisors
Patricia Carr

UK/US:
Giedra Rackauskas

Production Co-ordinators
Janine Lodge

LA:
Gretchen Van Zeebroeck

Production Manager
Jeannie Stone

Unit Production Manager
Edward D. Markley

Location Managers
Gilly Case

Kevin De la Noy

2nd Unit Directors
Martin Brierley

Action Sequences:
David Hogan

Casting
US:

Billy Hopkins

UK:
Priscilla John

ADR Voice:
Barbara Harris

Extras:
Central Casting

Assistant Directors
Chris Carreras

Marcia Gay

Jamie Christopher

Richard Styles

2nd Unit:
Ken Shane

Nick Heckstall-Smith

Action Sequences:
Steve Harding

Terry Madden

Chris Brock

LA:
Josh McLaglen

Xochi Blymyer

Richard "Dub" Wright

Screenplay
David Giler

Walter Hill

Larry Ferguson

Story
Vincent Ward

Based on characters
created by Dan

O'Bannon, Ronald

Shusett

Director of Photography
Alex Thomson

Panavision

Colour
Rank

Additional Photography
Mark Plummer

Gary B. Kibbe

2nd Unit Photography
Nic Morris

Paul Beeson

Action Sequences:
Tony Spratling

Alien Puppet Photography
Rick Fichter

Optical Photography
Fred Lin

Robert Montgomery

Bruce Manning

Matte Photography
Alan Harding

Miniature Photography
David Stewart

Camera Operators
David Worley

David Hardberger

Scott Beattie

2nd Unit:
Mike Frift

Action Sequences:
Neil Binney

Wally Byatt

Digital:
Stephen Stanton

Animation:
Colin Campbell

Motion Control:
Steve Kosakura

LA:
Frederick J. Smith

William D. Barber

Steadicam Operator
Peter Robinson

Video

Playback:
Thomas Loewy

Medical Scan

Graphics/Displays:
Video Image

Rhonda C. Gunner

Richard E. Hollander

Gregory L. McMurray

John C. Wash

Janet Earl

Visual Effects
Producer:

Richard Edlund

Line Producer:
Donna Langston

Supervisor:
Richard Edlund

Co-supervisor:
Rick Fichter

Production Supervisor:
Ellen Somers

Co-ordinator:
Julia Rivas

UK Co-ordinator:
Russ Woolnough

Editors:
Tim Grover

Robert Wait

Art Director:
David Jones

65mm Special

Visual Effects
Boss Film Studios

Opticals
UK: G.S.E. Ltd

Department
Supervisor:

Michael Sweeney

Supervisors:
Ron Longo

Michael Cooper

Co-ordinator:
Kim Shriver

Line-up:
Mary Walter

Kevin Clark

Phil Janssens

Matte Department
Supervisor

Michele Moen

Matte Painter
Paul Lasaine

Digital Effects Supervisor
Jim Rygiel

Animation Supervisor
Mauro Maressa

Rotoscope
Supervisor:

Annick Therrien

Artists:
Nina Salerno

Maura Alvarez

Jammie Friday

Editor
Terry Rawlings

Production Designer

Norman Reynolds

Supervising Art Director
Fred Hole

Art Directors
James Morahan

LA:
Gene Nollman

Christopher Burian-

Mohr

Set Decorators
Belinda Edwards

LA:
Mickey S. Michaels

Conceptual Artists
Gregory Pruss

Jake Scott

Conceptual Architect
Lebbeus Woods

Senior Draughtsman
Ted Ambrose

Draughtsmen
Mike Boone

Andrew Ackland-Snow

Additional Illustrations
Steve Berg

Scenic Artist
Brian Bishop

Storyboard Artists
Martin Asbury

Bill Stallion

Mike Swift

Opening Sequence:
Brent Boates

Sculptures
Roy Rodgers

Jan Stevens

Special Effects Supervisor
George Gibbs

Special Effects
Foreman:

Bill Klingner

LA Foreman:
Joe Ramsey

Co-ordinators:
Al Disarro

William Aldridge

Flying Wire Specialist:
Bob Wiesinger

Alien Effects
Designers/Creators:

Alec Gillis

Tony Woodruff Jnr

Crew:
Gino Acevedo

Chris Halls

David Leroy Anderson

Gary Pollard

Dave Elsey

Dave Keen

Yuri Everson

Mitchell Coughlin

Dave Nelson

Mark Coulter

Jeremy Hunt

Paul Dunn

Julian Caldwell

Mike Scanlan
N. Brock Winkless
Peter Abrahamson
Wayne Toth
Norman Cabrera
John Teska
José Fernandez
Norman Tempia
Anthony Allen Barlow
Roger Borelli
Chris Hunt
Ian Morse
Steve Norrington
Cathy MacDonald
Karen Lafler
Brendan Lonegan
Original Alien Design
H.R. Giger

UV Effects
Wildfire, Inc

Model Shop
Supervisor:

David Jones

Co-ordinator:
Christopher Bowler

Lead Modelmakers
John Michael Eaves

Patrick McClung

Modelmakers
Gerald McClung

David Montgomery

Douglas Miller

Michael Possert

Paul Ozzimo

John Ferrari

Robert Johnston

Robert De Palma

Lead Puppeteer
Laine Liska

Puppeteer
Craig Talmay

Music
Elliot Goldenthal

Music Director
Jonathan Sheffer

Orchestrations
Elliot Goldenthal

Additional:
Robert Elhai

Music Producer
Matthias Gohl

Supervising Music Editor
Craig Pettigrew

Music Co-ordinator
Christopher Brooks

Synthesizer Programming
Richard Martinez

Song
"In the Year 2525

(Exordium and

Terminus)" by

Rick Evans

Costume Design
Bob Ringwood

David Perry

Wardrobe
Supervisor:

Janet Tebrooke

Master:
Joe Hobbs

Mistress:
Yvonne Hobbs

LA:
John Casey

Victoria Snow

Make-up
Supervisor:

Peter Robb-King

Sigourney Weaver:
Linda Devetta

Chief Artists:
Nick Dudman

Jane Royle

LA:
Susan A. Cabral

Special Make-up Effects
Greg Cannom

Title Design
John Beach

Black Box

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Sound Design
Harry Snodgrass

Supervising Sound Editor
Gary S. Gerlich

Sound Editors
Gregory M. Gerlich

Richard Le Grand Jnr

Elliot L. Koretz

William Jacobs

Teri E. Dorman

Edward Sandlin

Supervising ADR Editor
William C. Carruth

ADR Editors
Juno J. Ellis

Michele Perrone

Petra Bach
Jim Shields
Supervising Foley Editor
David L. Horton Jnr

Foley Editors
Victoria Martin

Jerry Michael Jacobson

Sound Recordists
Tony Dawe

Bob Renga

LA:
Donald H. Matthews

Music:
Joel Iwataki

Tim Boyle

ADR Recordists
Peter Lacey

Charleen Richards

Brad Brock

Dolby stereo

Consultant:
Douglas Greenfield

Sound Re-recordists
Sergio Reyes

Chris David

Richard Overton

Foley Artists
David Lee Fein

Ken Dufva

Technical Supervisor
Philip Crescenzo

CGI Technical Directors
Colin Olson

Mary McCulloch

Andrea Losch

Production Assistant
Marc Hammer

Stunt Co-ordinator
Marc Boyle

Stunts
Simon Crane

Nick Gillard

Paul Jennings

Sean McCabe

Rann Miner

Val Musetti

Mark Newman

Armourer
Simon Atherton

Animal Trainers
Paul Calabria

Karen Dew

Animal Handler
Mike Culling

Cast
Sigourney Weaver

Warrant Officer Ripley

Charles S. Dutton

Dillon

Charles Dance

Clemens



... Sigourney Weaver and alter ego

After the battle with the Xenomorphs on planet LB 426, Warrant Officer Ripley drifts through space in an escape craft with two other survivors, Newt and Hicks, and the remains of the android, Bishop. As they sleep, the craft malfunctions and crash-lands on Fiorina 161, a near-derelict mining planet worked for the Company (Ripley's former employers) by a 28-man group of convicts, members of a devout religious sect. Rescued from the wreckage by a search party with a guard dog, Ripley learns that Newt and Hicks are dead. She is warned by the community's warden, Andrews, that a woman's presence would be disruptive, and he instructs her to remain in the infirmary until a Company ship can collect her.

But with the help of the medical officer, Clemens, Ripley begins to investigate Newt's death and persuades Clemens to perform an autopsy. Nothing sinister is revealed, and the bodies are cremated; as Dillon, spiritual leader of the prisoners, conducts the service, the guard dog collapses unobserved, an alien emerging from its body. Her head shaved like theirs to avoid lice-infestation, Ripley begins to make contact with the other prisoners, finding Dillon an unexpected ally when there is an attempted rape. After a convict, Murphy, is violently killed, Ripley links what is left of Bishop's circuits to the escape craft's computer records, and establishes that an alien did indeed share the flight with them.

When Golic, a former mass-murderer, dementedly tells of an attack by a supernatural being, Ripley at last informs Andrews about the Xenomorphs. He and his assistant, Aaron, receive her story with contempt, but Ripley's warning is fully substantiated when the alien kills Clemens and then Andrews. Aaron, Dillon and Ripley formulate a plan to trap the creature in a toxic-waste disposal chamber, but the attempt is a disastrous failure. Feeling increasingly unwell, Ripley tests herself with a medical video-scanner and finds that an

alien is gestating inside her; it is probably a Queen, capable of producing thousands more.

At her desperate entreaty, Dillon agrees to kill her after the existing Xenomorph has been destroyed. They prepare a trap for the alien in a pit of molten lead, but Dillon is killed before the creature is finally destroyed. The Company rescue team arrives, headed by the technologist Bishop, originator of Ripley's synthetic partner; the Company is determined to take back one alien specimen for research purposes, and Bishop promises that Ripley will be safe if she returns with them so that the Xenomorph can be surgically removed from her body. But Ripley no longer trusts Company promises. Firmly grasping the embryonic alien as it bursts, shrieking, through her chest, she falls into the molten pit that will destroy them both. Closing down the settlement, Bishop prepares to return to Earth empty-handed.

With its monastic community of hardened criminals brought low by the unsolicited intrusion of a woman, *Alien³* contains distinct possibilities as an allegory about a plague-carrier. Here, thanks to science fiction serving its usual function as bland recycling agent, is Prince Prospero's haunted palace, cruelly desaturated of its finery and colours and updated to the Aids era. Like an anguished envoy of retribution, Ripley and her *alter ego*, fugitives from *Forbidden Planet*, bring death to her new lover and his companions until, martyrs to the cause of extermination, they are embraced in a final sacrifice.

If Ridley Scott's Ripley was a somnambulist and James Cameron's a single parent, the Ripley of *Alien³* is a psychotic, at war with the poison inside her. The pathos of her terminal plunge, worthy of bright Lucifer, is that the Xenomorphs – who are, in any case, capable of reappearing on some other planet at any time – are not the only form of infection in the Universe. The Company, omnipotent and man-

ipulative and comparably evil, is another. The sub-text of the *Alien* series, clearly ready to surface at the drop of another sequel, is the contest between these two conspiracies, aliens versus Company in a race to plunder the stars. Ripley's attempts to thwart their unholy alliance can also most logically be read as a lightly fictionalised version of Sigourney Weaver's own reported duels with Fox in pursuit of an acceptable script.

The Company may lay claim to ownership of the Xenomorphs with their remarkable profit-earning talents, but Ripley/Weaver, whose refusal to trust the duplicitous Company in *Alien³* is delivered with a special venom, belongs to nobody except, perhaps, to the snarling infant she clutches to her breast. We may guess from her death-fall that the Company, who even omitted the Ripley character from several versions of the screenplay, is now satisfied that it can manage without her. Ironically, it may also, after *Alien³*, have to manage without the Xenomorphs as a significant item on the balance sheet. Completing the unforeseen trilogy, this is a sad and incoherent non sequitur, which could have been developed in isolation, or as part of a Vincent Ward triptych (the director of *Vigil* and *The Navigator: a Medieval Odyssey* was the only writer in an army of hired-and-fired recruits to retain a credit for the story-line).

Alien³ is so confident of alien-awareness in its audience that it even omits Ripley's revelations to her hosts about her past experiences. It then switches uncomfortably between thumbnail sketches of the brotherhood on Fiorina 161 (whose religious mania is an inexplicable and unexplored complication) and variations in the alien's behaviour, such as its rather fragile emergence from a dog, its peculiarly unsettling bursts of speed, and its almost fraternal sparing of Ripley in a scene of glutinous contemplation. Contradicting its own assumptions, *Alien³* disposes at once of Ripley's 'family' (adoptive husband, daughter and all-purpose

android, well-used). The switch from a Cameron fable of courageous partnership to a vaguely mediaeval melodrama set in a weaponless *Mad Max* outpost seems a cynical and unwelcome denial of the hard-won victory at the end of *Aliens*. But worse disorientation is to follow.

Not previously known for her reticence, Ripley unaccountably refuses to warn anyone of their possible risk although, like the rest of us, she must be unclear how it is that the Xenomorph has accompanied her, or why and when she alone is impregnated (it was Newt, after all, who was 'cocooned' in *Aliens*), or how the creature, changing rules, size and appearance as it goes along, chooses to leave her unscathed to lead the fight against it. Newcomer David Fincher, whose videos for Madonna, George Michael, Billy Idol and Pepsi-Cola have excited admiration in certain quarters, inherits the remains of the Xenomorph project (after others like Renny Harlin, Eric Red, and cyberpunk writer William Gibson have come and gone) with perceptible edginess. A good sense of visual composition (among settings by some of Pinewood's finest) is generally thwarted by his disinclination to remain with any one shot for more than a few seconds.

Hampered by the inevitability that his shaven-headed cast all look much the same and must, in any case, suffer much the same fate, he struggles to avoid turning the action into a series of abrupt slayings in gloomy corridors, a ritual quickly dulled by repetition. There is the brief chance that Charles Dance, sardonic as ever, will turn the whole affair into a comedy, but his early removal leaves Sigourney Weaver, looming grimly amid the scuttling clerics, to supervise the spread of the Black Death. "Don't be afraid", she mutters, patrolling the labyrinth in pursuit of the monster, "I'm part of the family. You've been in my life so long I can't remember anything else". The lines have a heartfelt ring.

Philip Strick

Batman Returns

USA 1992

Director: Tim Burton

Certificate

12

Distributor

Warner Bros

Production Company

Warner Bros

Executive Producers

Jon Peters
Peter Guber
Benjamin Melniker
Michael Uslan

Producers

Denise Di Novi
Tim Burton

Co-producer

Larry Franco

Associate Producer

Ian Bryce

Production Associate

Diane Minter
Tara Meaney-Crocitto

Production Managers

Ian Bryce
Jill Jacobs

Costing

Alec Kamp
Marion Dougherty
Associate:
Rachel Abrahams

Assistant Directors

David McGiffert
Carla Corwin
Marge Plane

2nd Unit:

Artist Robinson
Kevin Duncan
Screenplay
Daniel Waters

Story

Daniel Waters
Sam Hamm
Based on characters
created by Bob Kane

Director of Photography

Stefan Czapsky

Colour

Technicolor

2nd Unit Photography

Don Burgess

Supervising Visual Effects

Photography

Dennis Skotak

Visual Effects Photography

James Belkin
George Dodge
Old Zoo: Tim Angulo
Miniatures Photography
Garry Waller
Plate Photography
Neil Krepla
Matte Photography
Alan Harding
Optical Photography
Robert Montgomery
Pat Repola
Motion Control
Motion Photography
Cameron Noble
Camera Operators
Rob Hahn
2nd Unit:
Chris Squires
Digital:
Stephen Stanton
Matte:
Wade Childress
Old Zoo Visual Effects:
Max Penner
Steadicam Operator
Bob Gorlick
Visual Effects Supervisor
Michael Fink
Visual Effects Co-ordinator
Erik Henry
Vistavision Special
Visual Effects
Boss Film Studios
Supervisor:
John Bruno
Co-supervisor/
Art Director:
Brent Boates
Production Supervisor:
Ellen Somers
Line Producer:
Christine Sellin

4-Ward Productions

Visual Effects

Robert Skotak
Elaine Edford
Supervisor:
Robert Skotak
Line Producers:
Robin D'Arcy
Jenny Fulle
Production
Co-ordinator:
Jennifer Bell
Associate Producer:

Holly Borradaile

Matte World Visual Effects

Supervisors:
Michael Pangrazio
Craig Barron
Executive-in-charge
of Production:
Krystyna Demkowicz
Production
Co-ordinator:
Martin Matzinger
Old Zoo Visual Effects
The Chandler Group
Supervisors:
Don Baker
John Scheele
Stage Manager:
Keith Claridge
Motion Control
Operator:
Josh Cushman
Opticals
Pacific Titles
Optical Supervisors
Michael Sweeney
Michael Cooper
Ron Longo
Les Ditter
Optical Line-up
Lori Nelson
Kevin Clark
Matte Department
Supervisor
Michele Moen
Matte Artists
Bill Mather
Brian Flora
Christopher Evans
Digital Effects
Supervisor: Jim Rygiel
Animators: Colin Olson
Andy White
Andrea Losch
Additional Digital
Compositing
Pacific Data Images
Digital Bats/
Batmobile Shields
Video Image:
Rhonda C. Gunner
Richard E. Hollander
Gregory L. McMurry
John C. Wash
Batboat/Batmissile/
Duck Car
Jay Ohrberg Star Cars
Animators
Barry Dempsey
Barbara Meier
Rotoscope
Supervisor:
Annick Therrien
Artist:
Nina Salerno
Visual/Technical Costume
Effects Supervisor
Vin Burnham

Costume Effects

Ray Tricker
Paul James
Day Murch
Alli Eynon
Dorothy Bulac
Michael Bastings
Mary Mason
Paul Barrett-Brown
Editors
Chris Lebenzon
Film:
Bob Badami
Production Designer
Bo Welch
Supervising Art Director
Tom Duffield
Art Director
Rick Heinrichs
Set Design
Nick Navarro
Sally Thornton
Set Decorator
Cheryl Carasik
Special Effects Supervisor
Chuck Gaspar
Special Effects Foremen
Mike Edmondson
Boss Film Studios:
Bill Klinger
Special Effects
Jan Aaris
Karl Nygren
Elmer Hui
Scott Forbes
Bruce Robles
Mike Weaver
Andy Evans
Ken Clark
Dan Gaspar
Refrigeration Effects:
Aggreko Inc.
Mechanical Effects
Supervisor
Mike Reedy
Boss Film Studios Model
Shop Supervisor
David Jones
Model/Miniature Set
Supervisors
Jim Towler
Stephen Brien
Lead Modelmaker
Mike Joyce
Modelmakers
Bryson "Pete" Gerard
John Merritt
Gary Rhodaback
Monty Shook
Miniature Shop
Fabrication/Operation
Ricc Ruskuski
Joel Steiner
Doug Moore
Patrick Denver
Old Zoo Miniature Effects
Stetson Visual Services

Supervisors:

Mark Stetson
Robert Spurlock
Chief Modelmaker:
Ian Hunter
Lead Model Painter:
Ron Gress
Pyrotechnic
Supervisor:
Joseph Viskocil
Puppeteers
Andy Schoneberg
Len Burge III
Karen Mason
Ian Stevenson
Jeffrey Edwards
Craig Canton-Largent
Music
Danny Elfman
Music Director
Jonathan Sheffer
Orchestrations
Steve Bartek
Additional:
Mark McKenzie
Music Producers
Danny Elfman
Steve Bartek
Music Editors
Bob Badami
Bill Bernstein
Songs
"Face to Face" by
Danny Elfman,
Siouxie & the
Banshees, performed
by Siouxie & the
Banshees; "Super
Freak" by Rick James.
Alonzo Miller
Costume Design
Bob Ringwood
Mary Vogt
Costume Supervisors
Men: Norman Burza
Women: Oda Groeschel
Set Costumers
Gregory Carneiro
Marjorie Chan
Steve Shubin
Myron Baker
Jennifer Morrison
Eddie Burza
Make-up
Supervisor: Ve Neill
Artists: Greg Nelson
Brad Wilder
Bob Mills
Rhonda Specter
Special Penguin Make-up
Effects Producer
Stan Winston
Penguin Make-up Design
Shane Mahan
John Rosengrant
Mark "Crash" McCreety
Title Design
Robert Dawson
Supervising Sound Editors
Richard L. Anderson
David Stone
Sound Editors
Julia Evershade
Michael J. Benavente
Warren Hamilton Jr
John C.C. Dunn
Dialogue:
Jim Christopher
Stephen Hunter Flick
Mike Chock
Supervising ADR Editor
Mary Andrews
ADR Editor
Jessica Gallavan
Sound Recordists
Petur Hliddal
2nd Unit:
Roger Pietschmann
Music:
Shawn Murphy
ADR Recordist
Thomas J. O'Connell
 Foley Recordist
David Miranda
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Steve Maslow
Jeffrey J. Haboush
Sound Effects
John Pospisil
Eric Potter
 Foley Artists
Vanessa Theme Ament
Hilda Ann Hodges
Technical Supervisor
Philip Crescenzo

Stunt Co-ordinators

Max Kleven
Charlie Croughwell
Stunts
Scott Sproule
Patricia M. Peters
Brian Smrz
Mike Cassidy
Kathy Long
David Lea
Heather Ann Ryan
Richard Drown
Animal Trainer
Gary Gero
Cast
Michael Keaton
Batman/Bruce Wayne
Danny DeVito
Oswald Cobblepot,
"the Penguin"
Michelle Pfeiffer
Catwoman/Selina Kyle
Christopher Walken
Max Shreck
Michael Gough
Alfred
Michael Murphy
Mayor
Cristi Conaway
Ice Princess
Andrew Bryniarski
Chip
Pat Hingle
Commissioner Gordon
Vincent Schiavelli
Organ Grinder
Steve Witting
Josh
Jan Hooks
Jen
John Strong
Sword Swallower
Rick Zumwalt
Tattooed Strongman
Anna Katarina
Poodle Lady
Gregory Scott Cummins
Acrobat Thug
Erika Andersch
Knifethrower Dame
Travis McKenna
Fat Clown
Doug Jones
Thin Clown
Branscombe Richmond
Terrifying Clown
Paul Reubens
Penguin's Father
Diane Salinger
Penguin's Mother
Stuart Lancaster
Penguin's Doctor
Cal Hoffman
Happy Man
Joan Jurige
Happy Woman
Rosie O'Connor
Adorable Little Girl
Sean M. Whalen
Paperboy
Erik Onate
Aggressive Reporter
Joey DePinto
Shreck Security Guard
Steven Brill
Neal Lerner
Ashley Tillman
Elizabeth Sanders
Gothamites
Henry Kingi
Mugger
Joan Giammarco
Female Victim
Lisa Coles
Volunteer Bimbo
Frank DiElsi
Biff Yeager
Security
TV Anchorman
Robert Gossett
Adam Drescher
Crowd Member
Robert N. Bell
Niki Botelho
Susan Rossitto
Margarita Fernandez
Denise Killpack
Felix Silla
Debbie Lee Carrington
Emperor Penguins
Niki Botelho
Baby Penguin



...Michael Keaton...

Deformed baby Oswald Cobblepot is abandoned to the sewers by his parents. Thirty-three years later, Oswald, known as the Penguin, terrorises Gotham City with a gang of criminal circus performers, putting masked crime-fighter Batman on alert. Meanwhile, Selina Kyle, secretary to businessman Max Shreck, discovers that he plans to swindle the city by constructing an unnecessary power plant, and Max pushes her out of a skyscraper. She survives, her personality shattered, to become a criminal vigilante, Catwoman.

Max makes a deal with the Penguin to put him up for mayor so that he can bulldoze Max's power plant past objectors like millionaire Bruce Wayne, Batman's alter ego. While Bruce is intrigued enough by the changed Selina to ask her out, Batman tries to capture Catwoman, prompting her to form an alliance with the Penguin. Bruce and Selina dine together, but the Penguin appears on television denouncing Batman for allegedly kidnapping a beauty queen. Both make excuses and assume their other identities to rush to the scene of the crime. When the Penguin murders the kidnap victim, Catwoman breaks their alliance and survives his attempt to kill her.

Regaining control of the Batmobile, which the Penguin has turned into a remote-control death-trap, Batman jams the Penguin's election broadcast, and instead puts out a recording of the villain's unguarded contempt for the electorate. The Penguin reverts to his original scheme: the murder, in revenge for his own abandonment, of every first-born son in Gotham City. At a masked ball, Bruce dances with Selina and each realises the other's secret identity. But the Penguin intervenes, intent on carrying off Max's overprivileged son, Chip.

Max convinces the Penguin to take him instead, and is spirited away to a lair under an abandoned zoo while hordes of missile-carrying penguins invade the city. Batman reprogrammes the birds to destroy their master's sanctuary and, after a fight, the Penguin falls to his death. During the collapse of the hideout, Catwoman avenges herself by electrocuting Max and is buried in the rubble. Bruce, lonely in his cru-



Twisted souls of Gotham: Michelle Pfeiffer...

sade, glimpses a shadow which suggests that Selina has survived.

While Michael Keaton's Batman is top-billed on *Batman Returns*, after taking second place to Jack Nicholson's Joker on *Batman*, he is actually a supporting player. His familiar trauma, sensibly not rehashed here, is given far less weight than the appalling circumstances which create a pair of further grotesques: Danny DeVito's spherical Penguin, who is modelled after Werner Krause's Dr Caligari, and Michelle Pfeiffer's schizophrenic Catwoman, a ditzzy loser reincarnated as a PVC pervert. Kim Basinger's Vicki Vale is dispensed with in a few dialogue references which retroactively plug one of the first film's plot holes and set up a subtle sub-plot about Alfred the butler's concern for his master's obsessive crusade against crime: thwarted in his encouragement of Bruce Wayne's affair with Vicki, he observes of Batman's suspicion of the Penguin that "Perhaps you think there should be only one lonely man-beast in the city".

Just as Oswald Cobblepot and Bruce Wayne are warped by their absent parents, Selina Kyle is harangued on her answerphone by an unseen mother. Michelle Pfeiffer plays her at first as a variant on her big-city spinster from *Frankie & Johnny*, cocooned in her chintzy apartment (a sign lights up to read "Hello There" because she has no husband to greet her), then becoming alarmingly deranged as she gleefully trashes her cherished knick-knacks (the sign is broken to read "Hell Here") and stuffs cuddly toys into the waste-disposal grinder. The hints of a romance between Batman and Catwoman, raised in the fluffy 1966 *Batman* film, are carried through not only in the fetishistic clashes of leather and rubber outfits, but in a quietly scary exchange just after Bruce and Selina have realised - during public foreplay at a ball where they are the only people without masks - their mutual secrets, and Selina murmurs, "I hope this doesn't mean we have to fight".

The strangest S&M relationship in mainstream cinema, signalled by the potent image of Catwoman licking Batman's face from chin to cowl, threatens to reconcile their fractured personalities, but remains hauntingly unfulfilled. In this, the film is experimenting with a plot thread long resolved in the comics (before DC rewrote their multiple universe, there was a timeline in which Bruce and Selina married). But its real departure is to transform the Penguin from a comic felon, much like the quacking camp creature Burgess Meredith played on television, into a frightening and pathetic figure.

Given that in the interim since *Batman*, Tim Burton has directed *Edward Scissorhands*, it is hardly surprising that *Batman Returns* should emerge as a baroque companion-piece to that other fable of deformed outsider and absent family. First seen as an unknown thing



...Danny DeVito

in a Frank Henenlotter-ish basket delicately floating into the sewers as he is abandoned by his snobbish and snotty parents, the Penguin generates a strong sympathy which evaporates as Danny DeVito's intensely sewer-level performance becomes ever more demented. But the pathos reappears for a finale even more bizarrely affecting than that of *Edward Scissorhands* as a troupe of loyal penguin pall-bearers ease the bloated corpse into the water for a Viking funeral.

As signalled by the use of the character name Max Shreck (referencing Max Schreck, star of Murnau's *Nosferatu*) and such incidentals as a cameo (in the Red Death outfit during the masked ball) from the 1926 *Phantom of the Opera*, Burton is even more committed here to reviving the Expressionist style of the 20s than in the first movie. Gotham City, photographed by Stefan Czapsky and redesigned by Bo Welch in the spirit of the late Anton Furst, is a dark Metropolis, where the worlds of Robert Weine, Fritz Lang and Orson Welles meet, a fairy-tale scattering of snow over rusted girders and granite blocks adding much-needed visual relief while counterpointing the almost unrelieved darkness of the storyline.

This is a leaner concept than the original, able to concentrate on the mutually destructive relationships of its four protagonists. Gotham City becomes a world in which individuals adopt totemic animals and react with unrelieved psychopathic violence (even Batman casually kills a few minor thugs and pushes Catwoman off a building to one of her nine 'deaths'). Their flair for party costumes says something about a world which has systematically tortured and malformed them. Weird business still overburdens the plot - the Penguin's mid-point switch from running a mayoral campaign to Biblical genocide is awkward, and Burton is obviously much less interested in conventional action like the sequence with the out-of-control Batmobile than he is in fringe grotesqueries. But this is a rare follow-up that refines and extends the original, suggesting further possibilities to be explored, preferably by the same creative team.

Kim Newman

The Butcher's Wife

USA 1991

Director: Terry Hughes

Certificate

12

Distributor

Blue Dolphin

Production Company

Paramount

Executive Producer

Arne Schmidt

Producers

Wallis Nicita

Lauren Lloyd

Production Associate

Christina Sanchez

Production Office

Co-ordinators

Debbie Schwab

NY:

Rosemary Lombard

Production Manager

Catherine Sudolcan

Unit Production Managers

Steve Lim

Additional:

Timothy M. Bourne

Location Managers

Pamela Carter

NY:

Richard Baratta

Casting

Gail Levin

Voice:

Barbara Harris

Extras:

Todd Thaler

Assistant Directors

Kenneth D. Collins

E. Carey Dietrich

Rick Feder

NY:

Richard Patrick

Screenplay

Ezra Litwik

Marjorie Schwartz

Director of Photography

Frank Tidy

Colour

Technicolor

Camera Operator

Robert Charles Thomas

Steadicam Operator

Liz Zeigler

Video Playback

Charles A. Vogler

Visual Effects Producers

Syd Dutton

Bill Taylor

Illusion Arts

Optical Composites

David S. Williams Jr

Matte Artists

Robert Stromberg

Mannix Bennett

Editor

Donn Cambern

Production Designer

Charles Rosen

Art Director

Diane Yates

Set Design

James Bayliss

Martha Johnston

Dianne Wager

Set Decorators

Donald J. Remacle

NY:

Kevin McCarthy

North Carolina:

Bret Caldwell

Paintings

Carl Aldana

Special Effects Supervisor

David P. Kelsey

Music

Michael Gore

Music Director

Shirley Walker

Choir Arrangements

Randy Waldman

Carol Lombard

Jeff Morrow

Orchestrations

Shirley Walker

Music Production Set

Supervisor

John E. Oliver

Music Editor

Charles Martin Inouye

Songs

"(Love Moves in)

Mysterious Ways"

by Tom Snow, Dean

Pitchford, performed

by Julia Fordham;

"This Is Your Life"

by Caroline Buckley,

Sally Herbert, Roger

Swallow, performed

by Banderas; "Tain't

Nobody's Bizness If I

Do" by Porter Grainger,

Everett Robbins,

performed by Bessie

Smith; "Sing Sing

Sing" by Louis Prima;

"Just for a Thrill" by Lil

Armstrong, Don Raye,

performed by Ray

Charles; "In the Dark"

by Lil Green, "Gimme

a Pigfoot and a Bottle

of Beer" by Wesley

Wilson, "What'll I Do"

by Irving Berlin,

performed by Mary

Steenburgen; "Your

Love Just Ain't Right"

by André Williams,

Regie Turner, Keith

Williams, performed

by Angel; "Salsa No. 3"

by John E. Oliver,

Jonathan Wolff; "My

Foolish Heart" by Ned

Washington, Victor

Young, performed by

Stephane Grappelli,

Marc Fosset

Skating Choreography

Michael Fraley

Costume Design

Theadora Van Runkle

Costume Supervisor

Eric H. Sandberg

Costumers

Key:

Nancy Cone

Set:

Rhona S. Meyers

Demi Moore;

Lori Stilson

Make-up Artists

Rick Sharp

Demi Moore;

Robert Ryan

Title Design

Saxon/Ross Film Design

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors

Beth Stenner

Cecelia Hall

Sound Editors

Joseph A. Ippolito

Frank Howard

Constance A. Kazmer

Bob O'Brien

Alison Fisher

Trevor Jolly

Howell Gibbens

ADR Editor

Junio J. Ellis

Foley Editor

Pamela Bentkowski

Sound Recordists

Arthur Rochester

Gary Ritchie

Kathy McCart

East Coast:

Dennis Maitland

Music:

Armin Steiner

ADR Recordist

Bob Baron

Foley Recordist

Greg Curda

Dolby stereo

Consultant:

Thom Ehle

Sound Re-recordists

Steve Maslow

Greg P. Russell
Elliot Tyson
Foley Artists
Ken Dufna
David Lee Fein
Consultants
Music:
Ken Kushnick
David Passick
Psychic:
Maria Papapetros
Production Assistants
Michael Williams
Suzanne Myers
Paul Bode
Diane Burstein
Robert Rosen
Marco Orozco
Adam Kowalski
Fumi Mashimo
East Coast:
Tristan Bourne
Stunt Co-ordinator
Gregory J. Barnett
Stunts
Steve Boyum
Shane Dixon
David Draves
Roy Fanfel
Allan Graf
John Hartley
R.A. Rondell
Helicopter Pilots
Cress Horne
Al Cerullo

Cast

Demi Moore
Marina
Jeff Daniels
Dr Alex Tremor
George Dzundza
Leo
Mary Steenburgen
Stella

Frances McDormand
Grace
Margaret Colin
Robyn
Max Perlich
Eugene
Miriam Margolyes
Gina
Helen Hanft
Molly
Christopher Durang
Mr Liddle
Luis Avalos
Luis
Charles Pierce
Beau
Elizabeth Lawrence
Grammy d'Arbo
Stephanie Laurence
Choir Student
The Carol Lombard Kids
Church Choir
Barry Neilkrug
Bicyclist
Ed Kennedy
Uncle Chauncy
Diane Salinger
Trendoid
Cameron Milzer
Customer
Thomas Mikal Ford
Transvestite
Scott Baker
Fire Eater
Sam Menning
Doorman
Steve Love
Skater in Park
Sara Noel Herring
Young Marina
Ken Fritz
Streetsweeper

9,444 feet
105 minutes

Marina is a modest and unaffected young woman living on a North Carolina island. She is gifted with second sight and dreams that she will soon meet her husband, a man from another island. When Leo, an affable and rotund butcher from Greenwich Village, Manhattan, turns up on holiday, Marina decides that he is her dream husband. The two get married and return to New York. Marina helps Leo in the shop, but starts to disconcert him when she doles out her premonitions to customers along with their meat orders.

She tells Robyn, a soap-opera actress, that she will meet the right partner soon. Robyn construes this to mean that she will marry her boyfriend, Alex, a psychiatrist. But the latter is not amused when he learns that his girlfriend has been listening to a psychic, and confronts Marina. She takes his criticisms lightly. Later, she visits a boutique and advises a customer, Stella, to buy a glamorous evening gown. Stella, a church music teacher, has harboured ambitions to sing the blues, and takes Marina's advice as a sign to start a career singing in a jazz joint.

Marina also tells the boutique owner, Grace, that she will soon find love on her doorstep. Grace decides to cancel a weekend away with her best friends Alex and Robyn, despite the fact that Alex has set her up with a potential girlfriend. Alex, who is a friend of Leo's, as well as being Stella's psychiatrist, realises that Marina is having a more powerful influence on the people around him than he is. Leo, afraid that people will think that Marina is mad, pleads with her to stop giving out advice. He sends her to ►



Midsummer night's medium: Demi Moore

◀ see Alex, and the two end up roller-skating. Meanwhile, Leo visits the bar where Stella is singing, and the two realise that they have a lot in common.

They start an affair, which Stella confesses to Alex. One night, Marina dreams about Alex, realises that she has fallen in love with him, and rushes round to tell him. An overawed Alex tells her about Leo's affair; Marina is outraged, since though she now realises that she is not in love with Leo, she feels it is her duty to find him a new wife. Later, Leo and Marina decide to separate amicably and she returns home. Alex has meanwhile fallen in love with Marina but his professional life has veered out of control as a result. He goes to visit Grace for advice but finds her with Robyn. Later, Alex sees a falling star which he construes as a sign to go and find Marina, which he does.

● *The Butcher's Wife* must be one of the few films to boast a psychic consultant in its credits. She evidently wasn't able to foresee the film's demise at the American box office, where the casting of Demi Moore in a romantic comedy with a mystical twist failed to live up to hopes for a *Ghost*-like smash hit. Indeed, producers Wallis Nicita and Lauren Lloyd have attempted, without much success to date, to make their mark with the softer kind of material (their other two films are *Mermaids* and the love story *The Fires Within*). But *The Butcher's Wife* turns out to be a confident film debut from British director Terry Hughes – who has previously handled episodes of *The Golden Girls* sit-com – a modern fairy-tale that is fairy-light but blessed with a knowing and impish sense of humour.

The film follows the old play of letting loose a blithe and lithe spirit to wreak havoc in the lives of the not-so-happily settled – a midsummer night's

dream in a studio-built Greenwich Village with its hyper-real sheen. But Demi Moore as Marina, with her Goldilocks tresses and Southern drawl, does not set out to bewitch everyone; rather she's an honest and unpretentious backwaters gal who makes her mark on these Manhattan sophisticates and Greenwich Village eccentrics with her heaven-sent and homespun wisdom. While the joke is that there are as many psychics peddling their premonitions in New York City as there are psychiatrists, Marina is taken for the real thing.

Predictably, her magical powers are immediately welcomed by all the women – all looking for emotional fulfilment in the famously lonely city. Meanwhile, Leo and Alex are the sceptical males: Leo terrified that his new wife is a witch, while Alex (Jeff Daniels in his usual stuffed-shirt role, but this time a stuffed T-shirt emblazoned with the Plato quote, "An unexamined life is not worth living") sees her as a threat to his own rationalist authority. After all, as the psychiatrist, he believes he has the monopoly on the interpretation of dreams and derides Marina's powers as being some manifestation of that hazy wonder – female intuition (though Marina astutely comments that their two practices aren't that dissimilar, and that those who consult them often take away what they want to hear rather than what has been said).

If the storyline follows old plays then the message is equally ancient-love moves in mysterious ways (so enthuses the closing credit song). Thus rational, analytical and psychoanalytical approaches to the conundrum are skewered in favour of the dubious mystical approach. Certainly there wasn't a consultant psychoanalyst on this film. But then Hollywood does seem to be down on shrinks these days.

Lizzie Francke

Dakota Road

United Kingdom 1990

Director: Nick Ward

Certificate

15

Distributor

Mayfair

Production Company

Dakota Road Ltd

For Working Title

In association

with Film Four

International/

British Screen

Executive Producer

Sarah Radclyffe

Producer

Donna Grey

Production Co-ordinators

Jan Lovell

Julia Daly

Production Manager

Barney Reisz

Casting

Sarah Bird

Assistant Directors

A. J. Wands

Sue Quinn

Screenplay

Nick Ward

Director of Photography

Ian Wilson

In colour

Camera Operator

Ian Wilson

Editor

William Diver

Production Designer

Careen Hertzog

Art Director

Kave Naylor

Scenic Artist

Lynne Whiteread

Music

Paul Stacey

Music Adviser

Hans Zimmer

Music Extracts

"Goldberg Variations"

by Johann Sebastian

Bach, performed by

Andras Schiff; "Quartet

No.13 in B Flat, Opus

13" by Ludwig van

Beethoven, performed

by the Quartetto

Italiano

Music Performed by

Paul Stacey

Kenny Wheeler

Graham Preskett

Luis Jardim

Music Co-ordinator

Mel Wesson

Songs

"Grievin' Me"

performed by Pete

Franklin; "I Fall to

Pieces" performed

by Patsy Cline; "Big

Road Blues" performed

by K. C. Douglas

Costume Design

Careen Hertzog

Wardrobe Supervisor

Leslie Gilda

Make-up Artist

Fae Hammond

Titles

Plume Partners

Opticals

Capital F.X.

Elstree Film Optical

Sound Editors

Mark Auguste

Dialogue:

Richard Fettes

Sound Recordists

Simon Okin

Music:

Robin Prior

Marcus Lindsay

Julian Gordon-Hastings

Steve Price

Paul Bloom

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Aad Wirtz

Tim Cavagin

Robin O'Donoghue

Foley Artists

Dianne Greaves

Jack Stew

British Film Partnership

Consultant

Steve Clark-Hall

Production Assistant

Debra Hayward

Stunt Co-ordinator

Terry Forrestal

Cast

Charlotte Chatton

Jen Cross

Jason Carter

Raif Benson

Rachel Scott

Amy Cross

Amelda Brown

Maud Cross

Matthew Scurfield

Bernard Cross

Alan Howard

Alan Brandon

David Warrilow

Douglas Stonea

Liz Smith

Joan Benson

Alexis Denisof

Jacob

David Bamber

Man on the Train

8,055 feet

89 minutes



Low: Charlotte Chatton, Rachel Scott...

● Fifteen-year-old Jen Cross lives in a tied cottage in a remote part of the East Anglian fens with her father Bernard, mother Maud and younger sister Amy. Jen is fascinated by the nearby American air base and by her images of *Top Gun*-style airmen. She is having an uneasy affair with the devoted but inarticulate orphan Raif Benson, who works on the local railway. They are caught making love by the local vicar, Douglas Stonea, who has a protective relationship towards Raif. Concerned because Jen is underage, Stonea tells Raif's adoptive mother Joan Benson, who runs the local post office, to keep an eye on him.

Prompted by Jen, Bernard tells his employer, landowner Alan Brandon, that he can no longer go on using Brandon's crop sprays because they are polluting the local river, and Brandon fires him. Contemptuous of Raif's fear of authority, Jen tells him that she no longer wants to see him. When Maud goes to Brandon to complain about Bernard's firing, he offers her a job cleaning his house and she accepts, causing Bernard to fly into a rage. Bernard confesses his depression to Stonea, then hangs himself from the railway bridge.

In an abandoned car in the woods, Jen meets an American airman and makes love with him. Brandon tells Maud he is selling her cottage and suggests that she and her children move into a trailer in his courtyard. When Miss Benson dies, a distraught Raif disrupts her funeral service, rushing out to pursue Jen. The Cross family leave their house for the trailer; when Jen tells her mother that she is pregnant, Maud tells her to move out. Raif finds Jen at the abandoned car, and she says that she will stay with him.

● A tale of bitterness, repressed passions and implied incest on the East Anglian fens, *Dakota Road* looks like the first example of a new genre, Eastern Gothic. The first film to be made under the British Film Partnership (a scheme whose priorities are low budgets and flexible working practices), it is also unfortunately an archetypal underachieving British film – solidly cast and tautly scripted but visually drab. Its dreary fenland setting is shot in a way that is not so much televisual as reminiscent of a short by a student director with aspirations to television values.

This is a pity, because the bare bones of the drama give every scope for visual imagination. Writer-director Nick Ward portrays an inert, enclosed world, sparsely populated and with a mysteriously limited relationship to the exterior – a rather unreal setting which cries out for a more grotesque or stylised representation. Bearing in mind the underlying preoccupation with Americana, the film could have used a touch of the heightened reality that Philip Ridley – taking his cue from Terrence Malick – gave his imaginary, equally isolated Mid-West in *The Reflecting Skin*. Such stylisation might have borne up the often cumbersome



...director Nick Ward on location

structure of relationships between schematically drawn characters.

Wilful Jen and her loutish swain Raif the Waif are straight out of *Cold Comfort Farm*, while Brandon, despite Alan Howard's sympathetically diffident performance, is essentially a cold-hearted landowner of the moustache-curling Victorian school – duplicitous, vengeful and with a leery eye for both Jen, whom he watches through binoculars, and her mother, to whom he makes vague advances before manoeuvring her quite literally into his backyard. The film is overschematic from the opening sequences, in which the camera soars through the clouds and shows us the American flyer at close range in the cockpit. The air base is the site of Jen's fantasies, and the film's – the F1-11 an icon of soaring flight in sharp contrast to the stagnation of the fens.

The film refrains from over-emphasising its political point about the American presence and its eroding effect on an old order of local life, although it is rare that a British film should tackle this theme at all. The implications about the incestuous bonds between characters are similarly played down: Stonea's quasi-paternal relationship to Raif; the relationship between Raif and Miss Benson, who quizzes him wistfully on his love-making with Jen; and Bernard's feelings for Jen, whom he nervously approaches after his wife has rebuffed him. Despite some subtleties, an uneven script oscillates between understatement and overstatement: between, on the one hand, the telegraphic love talk between Jen and Raif, and on the other, the clumsy polemic about Brandon's pollution of the land ("It's yer dad's doing, ruined our river he has").

These scenes might have been less risible given a bolder stylistic approach. But Ward's tentatively decorative touches – stark shafts of light in the puritanically drab cottage, and Jen's soft-focus love-making in the woods – fail to prevent the film's final return to rock-bottom 'real'. As Jen and Raif are reunited – to what must surely be their mutual disadvantage – and Amy is seen walking off into the distance, it is as if the story's possibilities have been used up, in confirmation of the theme of barrenness. The effect, however, is anything but cathartic – it simply confirms the film's overwhelming tone of miserabilist realism.

Jonathan Romney

Daydream Believer

Australia 1991

Director: Kathy Mueller

Certificate

15

Distributor

Feature Film Co.

Production Company

View Films

In association with

Australian Film

Finance Corporation

Executive Producer

John Cooper

Producer

Ben Gannon

Production Co-ordinator

Maggie Lake

Production Manager

Anne Bruning

Unit Manager

Justin Plummer

Location Manager

Phillip Roope

Post-production

Supervisor

Anne Bruning

Casting

Liz Mullinar

Consultants

Extras:

Sandra McKenzie

Assistant Directors

Bob Donaldson

Nikki Long

James McTeigue

Screenplay

Saturday Rosenberg

Director of Photography

Andrew Lesnie

In colour

Additional Photography

Ian Jones

Roger Lanser

Opticals

Roger Cowland

Editor

Robert Gibson

Production Designer

Roger Ford

Art Director

Laurie Faen

Scenic Artists

Bill Undery

Michael O'Kane

Eric Todd

Frank Falconer

Music/Music Producers

Todd Hunter

Johanna Pigott

Music Supervisor

Christine Woodruff

Songs

"Daydream Believer"

by John Stewart,

performed by

The Monkees; "Wild Thing"

by Chip Taylor; "Bad

Boy for Love" by Ian

Rilen, performed by

Angry Anderson;

"Apache" by Jerry

Lordan, performed by

Mark Punch; "I Fall to

Pieces" by Hank

Cochran, Hatlan

Howard, performed

by Anne Kirkpatrick;

"I'm a Man" by Steve

Winwood, Jimmy

Miller, performed

by John Kenny; "With

You" by Johanna Pigott,

Todd Hunter, Sam

Brown, performed

by Sam Brown

Choreography

Robyn Moase

Costume Design

Roger Ford

Costume Supervisor

Louise Wakefield

Make-up

Judy Lovell

Rosalina Da Silva

Additional:

Elaine Fitcher

Trish Glover

Simone Wajon

Titles

Libby Blainey

Sound Editors

Greg Bell

Ashley Grenville

Andrew Cunningham

ADR Editor

Robert Werner

Sound Recordist

Guntis Sics

ADR Recordist

Martin Oswin

Dolby stereo

Consultant:

Stephen Murphy

Sound Re-recordists

Peter Fenton

Ron Purvis

Martin Oswin

Stunt Co-ordinator

Glenn Boswell

Stunts

Ric Anderson

Kerry Blakeman

Glenn Boswell

Richard Boue

Dar Davies

Brian Ellison

Zenda Graves

Lou Horvath

Claude Lambert

Ian Lind

Tony Lynch

Robyn Menzies

Wayne Pleace

Mike Read

Robert Simper

Bernadette Van Gyn

Lyddy Van Gyn

Don Vaughn

Bill Willoughby

Stand-ins

Miranda Otto;

Sandy Parker

Martin Kemp;

John Clingan

Armourer

Robert Colby

Animal Wranglers

Murray Chesson

Jody Harris

Steve Gladstone

Horse Master

Evanne Chesson

Cast

Miranda Otto

Nell

Martin Kemp

Digby

Anne Looby

Margo

Alister Smart

Ron

Gia Carides

Wendy

Bruce Venables

Stu

Katie Edwards

Nell as a child

Russell Kiefl

Nell's Father

Kerry Walker

Aunt Vera

Keith Robinson

Commercial Director

Dene Kermode

Rodney Lawton

Adam Cockburn

Terry

Jason Meeth

Adam Cockburn

Dene Kermode

School Bullies

Brian Blain

Headmaster

Howard Vernon

Dr Montgomery

Julie Godfrey

Schoolmistress

Emma Fowler

Schoolgirl

William Mather

Toucan Barman

Damien Cudmore

Toucan Doorman

George Whaley

Mike

Les Foxcroft

Perce

Jamie Jackson

Neville Lipsky

Geoff Morrell

Brad Hislop

Peter Hehir

German Film Director

David Wolozko

"Wild Thing"

Auditionee

Erica Peril

Dawn

John Mann

Tony Mason

David Weatherley

Lex Rubens

Deldre Rubenstein

Trish Schultz

Andrew Crighton

Steve

Rob Flynn

Peter Gartland

Mark Gerich

Don Harris

Paul Reynolds

Strippers

Tim Allen

Tom Solomon

Fringe Theatre

Directors

Tony Byrne

Auctioneer

Alan McQueen

Security Officer

Conal De Hugar

Peter Stevens

Vets

Peter Royle

Hotel Doorman

James RG Bell

Polo Commentator

7,740 feet

86 minutes

Brutalised by her father, young Nell takes refuge in the stables of their farm, where she plays out pretend games in which she takes on the identity of a horse. She is expelled from school for fighting back when attacked by a group of boys and is taken to a psychiatrist. In her twenties, an aspiring actress, along with her friend Wendy with whom she shares a flat, Nell is curly dismissed from one audition, and tearfully runs her elderly Volkswagen into the Lamborghini belonging to Digby, entrepreneur, promoter and stud farm owner. His backers are sceptical about the possibilities of success with his new show, and balk at investing in an old-time circus.

Nell asks Wendy for money to cover the damage to Digby's car, and Wendy obliges on condition that Nell accept a job in the male strip club where she works in order to repay the loan. Nell delivers Digby's money to his stud farm, where he is having problems with a particularly valuable mare, Nastassia, which has failed to become pregnant despite the use of a new artificial insemination programme. Nell is horrified to witness artificial insemination, and sensing that the mares are unhappy, she releases them. When she leaves, she inadvertently takes with her a canister of horse semen.

Realising that she has the semen, Digby confronts her at home, and is shocked when she tells him that three of his mares are pregnant. This is later confirmed by one of his assistants, and Digby brings Nell back to the stud to see if her intuition can reveal why Nastassia is still barren. Nell shows Digby how to handle horses and discovers from Nastassia that she is pining for her lover, a stallion called Cavalier Lad with whom she used to race. Digby agrees to buy the horse. Nell has meanwhile undertaken a punishing round of auditions in order to escape the owner's attentions at the club. Asked to strip by one producer, she panics and relapses into her 'horse' identity, neighing and pawing the ground.

Fortuitously, Digby is able to intervene and takes her, harnessed, in his car to the stud. There he learns about her traumatic childhood and tells her

about his broken marriage. When Nell leaves, Digby pursues her and arrives at the club just as she is being sexually assaulted by the owner in the aftermath of a comic strip act. Back at the stud, both of them rejoice in the birth of a foal to a happy Nastassia.

Daydream Believer is a curious film, and a curiously old-fashioned one as well. Sadly, it also seems to have succumbed to someone's 'Little LA in the South' ambitions (perhaps those of the Australian Film Commission, one of its backers?), mining an exhausted seam of sex comedy, slapstick and sentimentality while side-stepping its points of potential interest and psychological quirkiness. There are undoubtedly ways in which the Freudian basis for fiction in the Girls' Own Book of Horse Stories mode could be explored on film. Establishing a parallel between Digby's equine stud, with its mechanised sex acts (artificial insemination), and the club's male version, with sexuality reduced to sideshow, is one possible means. But running gags about horse semen serve less well.

The film's old-fashioned quality comes in part from its holistically romantic view of sexuality, love and procreation (Nell's cure for Nastassia's barrenness is also her own). As played by Martin Kemp, Digby personifies boyish charm, immense wealth and a *Tatler*-spread life style. He crosses the heroine's path – as these improbable romantic heroes frequently do in fiction as well as screwball comedy – through an embarrassing series of mishaps and misadventures. Thereafter, he rides increasingly frequently to the rescue, through a mixture of motives professional (he needs Nell's intuitive understanding of horses) and personal (through her, he overcomes his very British fear of physical contact). The narrative shifts into high melodrama as his climactic rescue saves Nell from rape.

At this point, however, Kathy Mueller's direction seems absent-mindedly off on a different tack, for the scene follows swiftly on that of Nell's confrontation of the club's female audience in a parody of a male strip routine. It is a scene which seems at some point to have suffered cuts, and its confrontational aspects are only embryonically developed. Indeed Nell's role as a comic on-stage – as opposed to off – receives sadly scant attention. In Miranda Otto's performance, Nell is the 'gutsy little tryer' of Australian literary and soap-opera tradition, a battler against the odds. In some startling early moments – in Nell's case, the odds of an abused childhood are sketched in like a horror film – Mueller reveals that she shares with Jane Campion a keen awareness of the stark effects on women of a specifically Antipodean – chauvinistic and colonial – cultural impoverishment. It is a subject to which she might do well to return with a little more single-mindedness.

Verina Glaessner

Far and Away

USA 1992

Director: Ron Howard

Certificate
T2

Distributor
UIP

Production Company
Imagine Films
Entertainment
For Universal

Executive Producer
Todd Halliwell

Producers
Brian Grazer
Ron Howard

Co-producers
Bob Dolman
Larry DeWaay

Associate Producer
Louisa Velis

Production Controller
International:
Kathleen McGill

Supervising Production Co-ordinator
International:
Alecia LaRue

Production Co-ordinator
Ireland:
Fiona Traynor

Production Manager
Ireland:
Seamus Byrne

Unit Production Manager
Larry DeWaay

Location Managers
US:
Michael Malone
Ireland:
Martha O'Neill

Post-production Supervisor
US:
Andrew Golov

2nd Unit Director
US:
Todd Halliwell

Casting
Karen Rea
Ros Hubbard
John Hubbard
US:
(Associate)
Donna M. Eckholdt
(Extras)
Bill Dance Casting

Assistant Directors
Aldric La'Auli Porter
Cherylann Martin
2nd Unit:
(US)
Ron Bozman
Kyle S. McCarthy
Dana J. Kuznetzkoff
Laura Ann Petticord
(Ireland)
Gay Brabazon
Lisa Mulcahy
Paul Barnes

Screenplay
Bob Dolman

Story
Bob Dolman
Ron Howard

Director of Photography
Mikael Salomon
Panavision Super 70

Colour
DeLuxe

Camera Operators
International:
Gregory Lundsgaard
US:
Additional:
George Kohut
Lawrence Karman
Douglas Ryan
Michael St. Hilaire

Steadicam Operators
International:
Gregory Lundsgaard
US:
Rusty Geller
Robert Gorelick

Spacecam Operator
Ron Goodman

Video Playback
International:
Neil S. Buckhantz

Optical Effects
Ireland:
Boss Film Studios
(Supervisor)
Michael Sweeney
(Line up)
Mary Walter
Kevin Clark
Lori Nelson
(Camera)
Fred Lin
Robert Wilson
(Co-ordinator)
Kimberly Shriver
(Editor)
Howie Stein

Matte Painting Effects
Supervisor:
Michael Pangrazio
Director of
Photography:
Craig Barron
Artist:
Bill Mather
Plate Photography:
Wade Childress

Animation
Supervisor:
Mauro Maressa
Camera:
WM. J. Hedge

Film Editors
Michael Hill
Daniel Hanley

Production Designers
Jack T. Collis
Allan Cameron

Art Directors
US:
Jack Senter
Ireland:
Steve Spence
Tony Reading

Set Design
US:
Joseph Hubbard
Robert M. Beall

Set Decorators
US:
Richard Goddard
Ireland:
Josie MacAvin

Set Dressers
US:
Chuck Lipscomb
Bruce D. Streetman
Mark E. Boucher

Production Illustrator
Peter A. Ramsey

Scenic Artist
Brian Bishop

Special Effects Co-ordinator
Lawrence J. Cavanaugh

Special Effects
US:
R. Bruce Steinheimer
Casey Cavanaugh
Jeff Knott
John McLeod
David J. Egan
Paul Stewart
Samuel E. Price
Tom Kittle
Sean Cavanaugh
Ireland:
John Richardson
Chris Corbould
Neil Corbould
Maurice Foley
Brendan Walsh

Music
John Williams

Music Performed by
Pan Flutes:
Tony Hinnigan
Michael Taylor
Uilleann Pipes:
Jerry O'Sullivan

Orchestrations
John Neufeld

Music Editor
Ken Wannberg

Song
"Book of Days"
by Enya, Roma Ryan,
performed by Enya

Choreographer
Monica Devereux

Costume Design
Joanna Johnstone

Wardrobe
Key Supervisor:
Pam Wise
Tom Cruise:
David Page
Nicole Kidman:
Kendal Errair
US:
James Tyson
David Powell
F. Maurice Palinski
Diana J. Wilson
Set:
Leah Brown
Joe McCloskey
Ireland:
Rhona McGuirke
Patrick Wheatley
Nigel Boyd
Lian Callaghan
Joanna Taylor
Set:
Anthony Black
Ann Stokes
Wendy Asher

Make-up Artists
Key:
Richard Dean
Edouard F.
Henriques III
Tom Cruise:
Michael Laudati
US:
Rod Wilson
Ireland:
Toni Delany

Title Design
Main:
Tom Martin
End:
Pacific Title

Sound Design
Anthony "Chic"
Ciccolini III
Lou Cerborino

Supervising Sound Editor
Anthony "Chic"
Ciccolini III

Sound Editors
Dialogue:
Stan Bochner
Thomas A. Gulino
Robert Hein

Supervising ADR Editor
Michael Jacobi

ADR Editors
Jeffrey Stern
Lisa J. Levine

Supervising Foley Editor
Stuart Stanley

Foley Editors
Dan Edelstein
Chic Ciccolini
Pam Demetrius
Eytan Mirsky

Sound Recordists
International:
Ivan Sharrock
Ireland:
(Music)
Shawn Murphy
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
US:
Lee Dichter
Dominick Taveila
Ireland: (Music)
Susan McLean

Sound Effects Editor
Richard Q. King

Sound Effects Recordest
Andy Aaron

Foley Artists
Elisha Birnbaum
Brian Vancho

Historical Research
Julie Donatt
Victoria Lucas
Clare Ditchburn

Production Assistants
US:
Ali Anderson
Adam C. Taylor
Jeffrey T. Bernstein
Paula Brown
Bill Connor
Brian Michael McNulty
Kirk Stepp
Darin John Rivetti
Mark Longie
Ireland:
(Office)
Tara Mullen
Ron L. Brinkerhoff
US:
Rod Wilson
Ireland:
Toni Delany

Title Design
Main:
Tom Martin
End:
Pacific Title

Sound Design
Anthony "Chic"
Ciccolini III
Lou Cerborino

Supervising Sound Editor
Anthony "Chic"
Ciccolini III

Sound Editors
Dialogue:
Stan Bochner
Thomas A. Gulino
Robert Hein

Supervising ADR Editor
Michael Jacobi

ADR Editors
Jeffrey Stern
Lisa J. Levine

Supervising Foley Editor
Stuart Stanley

Foley Editors
Dan Edelstein
Chic Ciccolini
Pam Demetrius
Eytan Mirsky

Sound Recordists
International:
Ivan Sharrock
Ireland:
(Music)
Shawn Murphy
Dolby stereo

Gene Walker
Jennifer Hunt Watson
Mike Watson
Raleigh Wilson
Ireland:
Brian Bowes
Graham Crowther
Perry Davey
Max Faulkner
Nick Gillard
Dominick Hewitt
Sy Hollands
Paul Kelly
Donal O'Farrell
Gary Powell
Lee Sheward
Alan Walsh
Jason White
Nick Wilkinson

Armourer
John McKenna

Wranglers
Rudy Uglad
Frank Askin
Russell Plain Feather
Phillip Cowling
Rex Peterson
Corky Hedrick
Guy C. Small
Griffin Hodson
Holly Uglad
Dennis Motes
Jeri Wales
Reid Overstreet
Dick Cole
K. C. Peterson
Phillip Harris
Ervin Lee Small
Rusty Hendrickson
Kent Smith
Richard Morrow
Seagraves
Brian Vermandel
Gene O'Brien
J.P.S. Brown
Wylon Plain Feather
Britt Givens
Bruce Randall
Jeff Danoff
Clayton Stambaugh
Larry McKinney
Bert Vermandel
Gary Mouw
Gene Walker

Helicopter Pilot
International:
Robert "Bobby Z"
Zajonc

Cast
Tom Cruise
Joseph Donnelly
Nicole Kidman
Shannon Christie
Thomas Gibson
Stephen
Robert Prosky
Daniel Christie
Barbara Babcock
Roma Christie
Cyril Cusack
Danty Duff
Eileen Pollock
Molly Kay
Colm Meaney
Kelly
Douglas Gillison
Dermody
Michelle Johnson
Grace
Wayne Grace
Bourke
Niall Tolbin
Joe Donnelly
Barry McGovern
McGuire
Gary Lee Davis
Gordon
Jared Harris
Paddy
Steven O'Donnell
Colm
Peadar Lamb
Farmer
Mark Mulholland
P. J. Brady
Peasants
Wesley Murphy
Landlord
Jimmy Keogh
Priest
J. G. Devlin
Gerry Walsh
Villagers
Brendan Cauldwell
Tavern Keeper
Derry Power
Peter

Noel O'Donovan
Matthew
Macdar O'Fatharta
John
Eileen Colgan
Kate Flynn
Joan O'Hara
Ladies
Frankie McCafferty
Map Vendor
Poli Moussilides
Hat Vendor
Pat Kinevane
Irish Vendor
Donncha Crowley
Flag Vendor
Tim McDonnell
Fruit Vendor
Todd Halliwell
Kenneth McCluskey
Thugs
Brendan Ellis
Rebel Leader
Clint Howard
Flynn
Jeffrey Andrews
Coniff
Judith McIntyre
Glenna
Rynagh O'Grady
Olive
Martin Ewen
Lampighter
Brendan Gleeson
Social Club Policeman
Frank Coughlan
Doctor
Hoke Howell
Crew Boss
Arnold Kuenning
Old Man
Rocco Sisto
Michael Ruud
Immigrants
DonRe Sampson
Railworker
Harry Webster
Derelect
Mark Wheeler
Officer
Rance Howard
Tomlin
William Preston
Blacksmith
Pauline McLynn
Joanne McAteer
Elizabeth Kemler
Cara Wilder
Aedin Moloney
Prostitutes
Helen Montague
Piano Player Prostitute
John-Clay Scott
Clay Lilley
Cole McKay
James Jude Courtney
Jeff Ramsey
Anthony DeLongis
Boxers
Carl N. Ciarfallo
Italian Boxer
Tim Monich
Bigoted Man
Alecia LaRue
Boston Maid
Ian Elliot
Turner
Bobby Huber
Social Club Thug
Julie Donatt
Louisa Marie
Social Club Women
Brian Munn
Henchman
Bob Dolman
Honest Bob
Phillip V. Caruso
I. M. Malone
Tom Lucy
Immigration
Policeman

12,598 feet
(70mm)
15,680 feet
140 minutes

Western Ireland, 1892. During a protest riot against excessive rents imposed by local landlords, Joe Donnelly is fatally hurt. Escorted home by his neighbour Duff, he summons his sons to his deathbed and makes his peace with his youngest, the belligerent Joseph. The funeral is interrupted by horsemen demanding rent arrears payable to Daniel Christie; when they burn down the house, Joseph vows vengeance and, with an ancient rifle provided by Duff, sets out to kill the landlord. Christie is a genial rogue with a wilful daughter, Shannon, who discovers Joseph hiding in their stable and wounds him with a pitchfork. Failing to complete his mission when the rifle explodes, Joseph is nursed by the Christies and quickly falls out with Stephen, manager of the estate and Shannon's suitor.

Stephen challenges him to a duel but Shannon intervenes and carries off Joseph in her horse and trap. She is running away to America to make a land claim, and needs a servant; despite their dislike of each other, Joseph has no choice in the matter. In Boston, Shannon is robbed by an apparent gentleman, McGuire, who has befriended her on the voyage; appalled, she now has to rely on Joseph for protection. Pretending that she is his sister, Joseph finds a room for them in a local brothel and establishes himself as a prizefighter in a club operated by an entrepreneur, Kelly. Meanwhile, back in Ireland, the Christie home is burned down by marauding peasants, and Shannon's parents decide to follow her to Boston, accompanied by Stephen.

Joseph protects Shannon from a boxing promoter, Bourke, who in return lands him with a contest against a merciless heavyweight. Severely beaten, Joseph is unable to continue paying for their board and lodging, and they are thrown out. Breaking into a house for shelter, they discover their love for each other; but the owner chases them into the snow with a gun and Shannon is shot. Having heard that the Christies are in Boston looking for their daughter, Joseph despairingly delivers her into Stephen's care.

Eight months later, Joseph is mining in the Ozarks when he impulsively joins a wagon train heading for a land-rush in Oklahoma. Amongst the hundreds of itinerants preparing to stake a claim are the Christies, Shannon reluctantly betrothed once more to Stephen. As the Cherokee Strip Land Race starts the next day, Joseph gallops head-long through the chaos to catch up with Shannon and Stephen as they reach a suitable stretch of land. In a final confrontation, Stephen concedes defeat, but Joseph is felled by Stephen's horse and nearly killed. He is revived by Shannon's protestations of love, and they plant the flag that signals the start of their new life together

Ever since his graduation in *Risky Business*, Tom Cruise seems to



Cocktails and a touch of Irish: Tom Cruise

have tailored much the same stories to fit his career. Light of foot and victorious of grin, he has made a habit of roles in which a skill is learned to perfection – anything from flying and racing to hustling and mixing cocktails – until, with an over-reach of confidence, he falls into the forgiving arms of his greatest fan and learns what life is really all about. With *Far and Away*, disarmingly structured as little more than a showcase for the star and his partner, Nicole Kidman, three new challenges are provided for Cruise to master: fist-fighting, horsemanship, and the Irish accent.

Scripted with that wondrously fantastical vocabulary by which American cinema has consistently celebrated Irishness from *The Quiet Man* to *Finian's Rainbow*, the latter task is the most demanding. Cruise rises to it with considerable spirit, tackling lines like "What a corker you are!" as if they were Joycean or, at worst, Wellesian. But fancy footwork cannot help him over the hurdles in this instance, and he proves no match for the real thing, represented here by the usual Cyril Cusack without whom Ireland would surely cease to exist on screen.

When it comes to fist-fighting, however, Cruise is on safer ground. A miraculously impermeable champion, his teeth and knuckles are unimpaired by contests rendered the more savage by a soundtrack in which the lightest left jab explodes like a grenade. Artfully bloodied, eyes undimmed by punishment, he celebrates each triumph with the Cruise trademark, a bouncing pirouette. Interestingly, Cruise in the saddle follows a similar pattern: he stuns a rebellious bronco into submission, rides it like the wind (or, more accurately, like W.S. Hart in *Tumbleweeds*, the super 1925 version of the same event), and gets his comeup-pance by being rolled on. This nearly kills him, but of course he's back on his feet, thanks to true love, within seconds.

Ron Howard lends a Dickensian solemnity to these events that makes them irretrievably comical. Happy to put Eastman Kodak's new 65mm stock through its paces, he punctuates the rough-and-tumble pantomime of *Far and Away* with long shots of a vast and astonishing clarity. An early duel scene is magnificently framed, and there is a nicely judged moment as the cannon sounds to begin the race and the settlers seem frozen at the starting line, but otherwise the new format, reminiscent of Cinerama without the panels, offers a notable risk of overstatement, particularly when Howard spirals us into the air along the supposed trajectory of departing Donnelly souls. Unable to transcend the fairy-tale fakery that has the young lovers thrown into the snow and yet, after three days without food or shelter, maintain their Pre-Raphaelite serenity, this is unrepentant and vapid nonsense, celebrated with inappropriate splendour.

Philip Strick

FernGully: The Last Rainforest

Australia 1992

Director: Bill Kroyer

Certificate

U

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Company

FAI Films

In association with

Youngheart

Productions

Executive Producers

Ted Field

Robert W. Cort

Co-executive Producers

Jeff Dowd

William F. Willett

Producers

Wayne Young

Peter Fauman

Co-producers

Jim Cox

Brian Rosen

Richard Harper

Line Producer

Tom Klein

Overseas Production

Supervisor

Nikki Vanzo

Production Co-ordinator

Time Art Studios:

Nikki Vanzo

Production Managers

Libby Simon

Overseas:

Kendra Haaland

Animation:

K. Patrick Stapleton

Carol Corwin

Karen Johnson

Productions:

Peter Denomme

A-Film:

Marie Bro

Time Art Studios:

Kim Young Ju

Studio Managers

Karen Johnson

Michael B. Hefferon

Karen Johnson

Productions:

Karen Johnson

Michael B. Hefferon

A-Film:

Anders Mastrup

Kroyer:

Ulrich W. Meyer

Ashley McGovern

Operations Manager

Kendra Haaland

Post-production

Supervisor

Robert S. Birchard

Pre-production

Co-ordinator

Lance Innes

Sequence Directors

Bret Haaland

Tim Hauser

Dan Jeup

Susan Kroyer

Casting

Marci Liroff

ADR Voice:

Barbara Harris

Assistant Directors

Tom Mazzocco

Ron D. Allen

Adam Kuhlman

Screenplay

Jim Cox

Based on the stories

by Diana Young

Animation Camera

Baer Animation

Camera Service

Colour

DeLuxe

Camera Operator/Manager

Dan Larsen

Camera Operators

Steve Damiani

Ron Jackson

David Link

Lin-Z Rogers

Steve Wilzbach

Video

Director:

Scott Young

Operator:

Gustavo Molina

Camera:

Michael Jackson

Opticals

Pacific Title

Animation Production

Kroyer Films

Animation Directors

Tony Fucile

A-Film:

Stefan Fjeldmark

Special Effects:

Sari Gennis

Animation Supervisors

Karen Johnson

Productions:

Dave Brewster

Kroyer:

Greg Manwaring

Animation Artistic

Supervisors

Tim Hauser

Computer:

Mark Pompiian

Animation Department

Manager

Todd Jacobsen

Animation Managers

Siam Mammoth

Animation:

Won Chul Shin

Krittaya Netpan

Leading Character

Animation

Crysta:

Doug Frankel

David Brewster

Zak:

Chrystal Klabunde

Magi Lune:

Jeffrey James Varab

Hexxus:

Kathy Zielinski

John Allan Armstrong

Batty Koda:

Dan Kuenster

Tony/Ralph:

Chuck Gammage

Goanna/Pips:

Stefan Fjeldmark

Animators

Jesse Cosio

Anne Marie Bardwell

Bret Haaland

Mike Cachuela

Ken Bruce

Tony Fucile

Susan Kroyer

Greg Manwaring

Dan Jeup

Mike Genz

Roy Meurin

Chris Sauve

Susan M. Zytka

Ralph Eggleston

Mark Sevier

Greg Hill

John Collins

Hanna Kukal

Jamie Oliff

Bob Scott

John Eddings

Roger Chiasson

Charlie Bonafacio

Doug Bennett

Bibo Bergeron

Ulrich W. Meyer

Glen Sylvestre

David Bowers

Steve Markowski

Additional:

Athanassios Vakalis

Mark Koetsier

Dave Kupczyk

Teddy Hall

Shane Zolvin

Skip Jones

Linda Miller

Robert Gibbs

Kamoon Song

Rick Villeneuve

Deke Wightman

Kevin Wurtzer

Kevin Johnson

Chris Mitchell

Lee McCaula

Larry Whitaker

Gary Andrews

Brian Mitchell

Adam Kuhlman

A-Film:

Asta Sigurdardottir

Karsten Klerich

Hans Perk

Kim Hagen Jensen

Jesper Moller

Michael Helmuth

Hansen

Jorgen Lerdam

Nancy Carrig

Shahin Ersoz

Anna Gellert Nielsen

Meelis Arulepp

Principal Effects Animators

John Allan Armstrong

Lisze Bechtold

Phil Cummings

Bret Hisey

Al Holter

Kim Knowlton

Craig Little-Herrick

Sallie McHenry

Kathleen Quilife-Hodge

Additional:

Allen Stovall

John Eddings

Bob Simmons

Rolando Mercado

Michael Oliva

Paul A. Bauman

Geoffrey C. Everts

Ko Hashiguchi

Joey Mildenberger

Marlon West

Computer Animators

Brian Schindler

Ira Shain

Animation Checkers

Ann Oliphant

Beverly Randels

Diane Jacobs-Matranga

Chuck Gefre

Tanya Moreau-Smith

Peggy Gregory

Carmen Alvarez

Maria Gonzalez

Gary Shafer

Jan Browning

Pat Sito

Susie Burke

Karen Hansen

Additional:

Brenda Brummett

Laura Craig

Dolores Hansen

Howard F. Schwartz

Clean-up Supervisors

Karen Johnson

Productions:

Claude Chiasson

A-Film:

Hope Devlin

Colour Stylist

Ralph Eggleston

Colour Modelists

Cristina A. Stocks

Wendell Luebke

Cathy O'Leary

Colour Model Painter

La Donna Hanover

Digital Painting/

Composited Scenes

Sidley-Wright &

Associates

Steven Wright

Joan Collins

Steven Sidley

Layout Design

Victoria Jensen

Layout Artistic Supervisors

André Clavel

Dan McHugh

Larry Elin
Rainforest:
Glen Threlfo
Helen Threlfo
Environmental:
Thomas E. Lovejoy
Production Assistants
Kevin Hincker
Charles Keagle
Phillip Todd
Jeremy Colin
Lennart Reinander
Animation:
Steve Kellener
Steve Wood
Computer Graphics:
Dinah Rogers
Kathy Baur
Australia:
Vicky Radnidge

Cast
Tim Curry
Hexxus
Samantha Mathis
Crysta
Christian Slater
Pips
Jonathan Ward
Zak
Robin Williams
Batty Koda
Grace Zabriskie
Magi Lune
Geoffrey Blake
Ralph

Robert Pastorelli
Tony
Cheech Marin
Stump
Tommy Chong
Root
Tone-Loc
Goanna
Townsend Coleman
Knotty
Brian Cummings
Ock
Kathleen Freeman
Naomi Lewis
Neil Ross
Elders
Janet Gilmore
Pamela Segall
Fairies
Danny Mann
Ash/Voice Dispatch
Anderson Wong
Rock
Lauri Hendler
Rosanna Huffman
Harvey Jason
Dave Mallow
Paige Nan Pollack
Holly Ryan
Gary Schwartz
Additional Voices

6,817 feet
76 minutes

Crysta, a young fairy who lives in FernGully, deep in the rainforest, learns from her mentor, Magi Lune, how humans left the forest long ago and how Magi conquered the evil spirit Hexxus who tried to destroy it. Magi tries to teach Crysta how to use magic, with mixed results. She subsequently befriends Batty Koda, a fruit bat who has escaped from a vivisection laboratory.

Wandering deeper into the forest, Crysta shrinks a young human lumberjack, named Zak, thinking that she is saving him from a mechanical leveller which is clearing the forest and which she takes to be a monster that eats trees. Zak has unwittingly helped to release Hexxus, who dupes the drivers of the leveller into heading for FernGully in order to destroy it. Unable to restore Zak to his normal size, Crysta takes him to FernGully, where he learns to respect nature.

They begin to fall in love, much to the chagrin of Pips, Crysta's previous boyfriend, and Batty, who distrusts all humans. But when Crysta realises that Zak lied to her about his logging activities, she rejects him. Hexxus has meanwhile levelled a great swathe of the forest and is advancing on FernGully. Magi Lune, using a seed and the magical power of the Web of Life, builds a tree for the fairy community to hide in, a sacrifice which consumes her.

Crysta bravely plants a seed in Hexxus, and with the help of the other fairies, turns him into a tree, while Zak manages to shut off the leveller in the nick of time and save Batty's life. Crysta restores Zak to his normal size, and he leaves FernGully, vowing to help the rainforest from within the human community, while Crysta and Pips fly off happily together.

Nature anthropomorphised has been a staple feature of animation ever since *Gertie the Dinosaur* clumsily danced for Windsor McCay nearly eighty years ago. Despite the trendi-

ness of its environmental subject *FernGully* fits in with a theme in animation that can be traced back to *Bambi*: a pure natural world, green in hoof and paw, under threat from human technology and rapaciousness; its none-too-subtle message is that we should respect the 'Web of Life' and recognise the consciousness of all creatures.

In one way, the anthropomorphic ability of animation makes it a near perfect vehicle for this kind of proselytising. Eisenstein discussed the relationship between animation and animism (the belief that everything possesses a soul) in his notes on Disney, and drew a rather questionable parallel between children and "peoples who are at the 'childhood stage' of social and societal development", suggesting a link between the animism of tribal peoples and the animation to which children are especially drawn. On the one hand, *FernGully*'s fairy guardians of the rainforest stand in for the indigenous people who have left the forest and are left out of the film. On the other, their smallness and innocence allows them symbolically to represent children (who are the audience for a number of other 'eco-conscious' cartoons, like *Captain Planet* and *The Toxic Avengers*, showing currently on Saturday morning television).

One might question, however, whether this is a noble attempt to stimulate nascent awareness of environmental issues (the double 'x' in Hexxus' name slyly invokes Exxon), or a more cynical attempt to exploit the issue. A number of details suggest that the film-makers have their antennae tuned to a wider market: only a kangaroo and a pair of Cassowary birds hint at the geographical specificity of Diana Young's original stories; an almost all-American cast (including Christian Slater and Cheech and Chong, with Robin Williams as Batty upstaging them all) supplies the voices; and a plethora of cartoon and youth-culture references (from *Back to the Future* to *The Simpsons*) has been dropped in.

Great pains were apparently taken to recreate the rainforest's hues, but because they lie behind the supersaturated colours of the characters, the backgrounds end up having a muddy quality despite the intricate details. The most effective use of the computer-generated animation is in the simulated tracking shots that penetrate the lush forest, lending a verisimilitude that Disney's old multiplane cameras could never have achieved (a proficiency to be expected from director Bill Kroyer, who supervised the computer animation for *Thron*).

With an eclectic soundtrack by a range of recording artists, several virtuosos sequences (including Hexxus' "Toxic Love" number which recalls "Pink Elephants on Parade" from *Dumbo*), and a script that generally avoids excessive sentimentality, *FernGully* should entertain both children and their parents, especially those who refuse to have tropical hardwood furniture in their homes.

Leslie Sharman

Fontan (The Fountain)

USSR 1988

Director: Yuri Mamin

Distributor
BFI
Production Company
Lenfilm Studios
Production Supervisor
Boris Pavlov-Silvanski
Unit Manager
Veniamin Kutikov
Assistant Directors
B. Gorlov
G. Pushkova
N. Sedova
M. Grigorev
M. Bozunova
N. Chepik
Screenplay
Vladimir Vardunas
Director of Photography
Anatoli Lapshov
In colour
Optical Photography
O. Plaksin
N. Plygun
Artists:
O. Kaliagina
V. Okovityi
Camera Operators
V. Amosenko
S. Nekrasov
Editor
O. Adrianova
Art Director
Yuri Pugach
Set Design
A. Vasin
T. Polianskaia
Pyrotechnics
A. Voronkov
Music
Aleksei Zalivalov
Music Extracts
Maurice Ravel
Francis Poulenc
Igor Stravinsky
Costume Design
V. Zhuk
Wardrobe Mistress
L. Karaseva
Make-up
Supervisor:
O. Izvekova
Artist:
N. Kovach
Sound Editor
Leonid Gavrichenko
Sound Recorder
V. Viktorov
Stunt Co-ordinator
D. Shulkin
Stunts
A. Pestov
A. Filaretov
D. Shulkin

Cast
Asankul Kuttubaev
Saty Berdy Kerbabaev
Sergei Dontsov
Petr Lagutin
Zhanna Kerimtaeva
Maia Lagutin
Viktor Mikhailov
Pavel Mitrofanov
Anatoli Kalmikov
Slavik
Liudmila Samokhvalova
Katia
Aleksei Zalivalov
Shestopalov
Nikolai Trankov
Ivan Gavrilovich
Ivan Krivoruchko
Popov
N. Usatova
Liubov' Andreevna
Ia. Stepanov
Drunkard
P. Fetisov
Vania
T. Leonova
Vania's Wife
E. Sudakova
Petrishcheva
T. Maksimova
TV Reporter

Dima Baevskii
Vadik
Asia Smekalova
Liubochka
N. Adomenaite
V. Azemsha
L. Arkus
M. Achintseva
M. Belinson
T. Brazhnina
V. Vavilov
A. Vasilev
V. Veselkin
N. Gorlova
S. Dmitriev
V. Dobromyslov
V. Diatlov
P. Efimov
S. Efremova
A. Elekoeva
A. Ermalovich
T. Zakharova
S. Zaitseva
S. Karabinskaya
A. Krasko
V. Kolpakov
A. Kotelnikov
V. Kravchenko
P. Laine
V. Leikin
Iu. Mamin
V. Maslov
M. Makarenkov
E. Makarov
V. Mironov
L. Molokova
A. Nikolaenko
G. Ordinova
N. Pivovarova
A. Poliakov
T. Ramm
Iu. Reshetnikov
I. Riuzova
V. Sorokin
N. Sakadzhi
V. Sidorov
V. Studennikov
M. Turik
B. Khotimskii
E. Chistov
V. Shapranov

9,090 feet
101 minutes

Subtitles

In the Kazakhstan desert, aged Kerbabaev coaxes water from under rocks. Two Russian lorry drivers arrive and dynamite the rocks, and a fountain gushes forth. But even before they drive off, the spring has dried up. Kerbabaev moves to Leningrad, where his daughter Maia is married to Petr Lagutin, who is responsible, with Pavel Mitrofanov, for the upkeep of a large apartment block. As they drive into the yard, the block's resident mad genius, Shestopalov, attempts to fly from the rooftop. Looking up, Petr and Pavel notice a large crack on the outside of the building.

During their tour of inspection, they encounter the block's motley inhabitants: Slavik and Katia are using their flat to grow thousands of tulips for sale; an old woman, Petrishcheva, holds a memorial meeting for her long-dead writer father; Shestopalov works with manic energy on his symphonic poem "To the Stars". Petr enrolls Kerbabaev as the block's temporary plumber, but a visit to the housing administration office reveals only incompetence and chaos. A hole appears in the roof, and horrified that a leak is causing a continuous water-spout in the yard, Kerbabaev turns off the hot water supply. The temperature in the flats plunges, the tulips wilt, and the house's inhabitants revolt.

Called to account by a visiting bureaucrat, Pavel cleverly presents these disasters as an 'economic experiment', a "citizens' response to the challenges of perestroika". At a meeting in the housing office, now bedecked with plangent Soviet slogans, the inhabitants 'unanimously' support the experiment as an excited TV crew reports to the nation. But Katia has been arrested for trying to sell off 1,500 tulips. She breaks down, hysterically complaining that her life is unbearable. The block's electrician, also at the end of his tether, plunges the whole building into darkness. The men who are holding up the roof abandon their posts and the roof caves in.

All the inhabitants gather with candles round three huge bonfires in the yard and sing the traditional Russian song, "Oh frost, frost". Inspired by this moment of transcendence, the house's inhabitants begin to help themselves. They get the water and electricity supplies working. Even the long-defunct lift springs into action, to the horror of Kerbabaev, who had taken refuge in it. A surge of electricity catapults him and the lift, through space, home to the Kazakh desert.

Apart from its Kazakh prologue and brief excursions to the housing office, all of Yuri Mamin's *The Fountain* is set in a single decaying apartment house in a soulless 'micro-region' on the edge of Leningrad. The stairwells of the house are gloomily brown and green and scarred by graffiti. And even in their flats, the inhabitants perversely manage to destroy any sense of comfort, of 'home'. Slavik and Katia have made their flat into a greenhouse; Petrishcheva's has become a drab liter-



A citizen's experiment: Aleksei Zalivalov

ary museum, its ghastly faded wallpaper sacred because the "poet and folklorist" jotted his masterpieces on it.

The flat of Shestopalov, the house's Leonardo, is an experimental recording studio, in which, at the heights of inspiration, he plays his piano with nose and tongue; and to Petr Lagutin's horror, his father-in-law Kerbabaev wants to turn their flat into a mosque – praying in front of the refrigerator, because that way lies Mecca, making his daughter eat in another room, regaling them with traditional lute music, and recoiling in horror from a TV broadcast of "rhythmic gymnastics" (or "Soviet sex", as Petr calls it).

Mamin is cheerfully open-handed in mocking all sections of society: the Soviet working man, with his penchant for vodka and for petty thieving (even Pavel Mitrofanov has four porcelain lavatory bowls sitting uselessly in his flat); the bureaucracy with their empty phrase-making; the vapid traditionalism and phoney Russian patriotism of the intelligentsia; war veterans; young people; TV crews who flaunt their Sony and Bosch equipment but offer a distorted version of events at the house. A target of particularly gleeful satire is all the sleek sloganising of perestroika. "They're stark raving mad", someone mutters, before joining the unanimous vote to support the 'citizens' experiment'.

If the house is a microcosm of the Soviet Union, and the film is full of

allegories – about Soviet policy in Central Asia, about state ownership of property, about the whole doomed lexis of 'perestroika' (the Soviet slogans, left over from a demonstration, fail to keep the roof up) – then they are lightly borne. *The Fountain* is full of humour and deft attention to detail, from the pregnant housing officer to the wild cats that abandon the house as rats leave sinking ships. Towards the end of the film, the mood darkens considerably as Katia shrieks, "I can't go on living like this", words later echoed by Petr Lagutin. (They have since come to symbolise the whole perestroika era as the title of Stanislav Govorukhin's documentary *We Can't Live Like This*.)

Despite this, the film ends on a note of hope, as the extraordinary yearning epiphany of "Oh frost, frost" unites everyone in a scene of fabled Russian stoicism. The *ardua* of Soviet reality confront Mamin's characters, but the *astra* of Shestopalov's symphony perhaps remain above them still. Complaints continue to be raised that Russian artists did not respond adequately to the task of depicting the Gorbachev years. *The Fountain*, with its wise, ample good humour (along with Kira Muratova's later, more sombre *The Asthenic Syndrome*) should be compulsory viewing for anyone who still wonders why perestroika, and the whole Soviet experiment, was doomed to failure.

Julian Graffy

Freddie as F.R.O.7.

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Jon Acevski

Certificate

U

Distributor

Rank

Production Company

Hollywood Road Films

Producers

Norman Priggen

Jon Acevski

Production Co-ordinator

Mo Simons

Production Manager

Lee Hill

Studio Manager

Maggie Powell

Storyboard Director

Denis Rich

Sequence Directors

Dave Unwin

Bill Hajee

Richard Fawdry

Stephen Weston

Roberto Casale

Alain Mairdron

Casting

Marilyn Johnson

Screenplay

Jon Acevski

David Ashton

Director of Photography

Rex Neville

In colour

Camera Operators

Tom Pridham

Henk Prins

Nic Jayne

Roy Dennis

Robert Roach

Jay Holloway

Visual Effects Supervisor

Peter Chiang

Opticals Operator

David Ball

Animation Director

Tony Guy

Animators

Philippe Rejaudry

Paul Stone

Dave Stone

Dave Osborne

Mike Pfeil

Keiko Masuda

Keith Greig

Bruno Le Floch

Arthur Button

Ronaldo Canfora

Dennis Hunt

Dimitre Bakalov

Connor Flynn

Anna Brockett

Mike Swindall

Robert Malherbe

Alan Green

Eddie Radage

Caron Creed

Richard Wasilewski

Alan Ball

Elaine Koo

Geoff Loyne

Monks McDonald

Eamon Butler

Clark Irving

Martin Collis

Matthew Freeth

Barry Hales

Co-ordinating Animators

Edoardo Cavalli

Ramon Modiano

Kevin Malloy

Gary McCarver

Gaston Marzio

Alan Simpson

Senior Special Effects

Animator

Les Newstead

Colin Hughes

Special Effects Animators

Les Newstead

Marie Doran

Martin Wansborough

Julie Phelan

Shelley McIntosh

Stephen Roberts

Animation Checkers

Renee Robinson

Frank Koller

Russell Murch

Layout Head

Ted Pettengell

Layout Co-ordinator

Chris Caunter

Layouts

Dan Mills

Bruno Le Floch

Gordon Harrison

Chris Sculley

Trevor Ricketts

Sue Butterworth

Backgrounds

Alex Bex

Ray Povey

John Butler

Mike Cosford

Paint & Trace Heads

Lucy Ash

Brian Phillips

Final Checkers

Jonathan Lukes

Guy Thompson

Helen O'Flynn

Kim Craste

Camilla Sharpe

Eithne Quinn

Peter Barwick

Chris Jones

Paula Kent

Colour Checkers

Victoria Clark

Julia Porturas

Head of Colour Stylist

Marilyn Collis

Colour Stylists

Megan Dickinson

Ben Zuehlcke

Anna Malni

Colour Mixer

Lidia Crowe

Tracers

Nuran Gungorencan

Alan Henry

Ron Erickson

Damian Foley

Robyn Drayton

Adrain Tripp

Pauline Morris

Jamie Nimmo

Micheala Ranalli

Bronagh Lawlor

Melissa Jessop

Marcus Rich

Belinda Hale

Painters

Gillian Harrington

Jung Suk Lee

Marcello Fodaro

Christopher Chorley

Gordon Burns

Trini Rowland

Sasha Leslie

George Francis

Barry Croft

Amy Green

David Ingham

David Griffith

John Baldwin

Fiona Stewart

Miles Lennard

Marina Venturini

Alistair Beckett

Alistair Vassiere

Guy Duchet

Gerald Gallego

Maria Gallego

Edward Ash

Lee Michael Hull

Claudio Fasola-Moore

Alex Barclay

Molly Slade

Fraser McDonald

Jonathan Brooks

Matthew Haynes

Karen Henry

Ana Rodrigues

Nicolas Flamel

Joanna Scott

Jeff Martin

Lyra Riley

Melissa Mee

Paul Ray

Nick Rafferty

Tania Thorne

Blue Sketch Artists

Pam Williams

Julie Hawkins

Sue Branch

Natasha Gross

Monica Herman

Ian Henderson

Michael Hirsh

In-betweeners

Jamie Ash

Simon Ashford

Peter Mays

Lee Chul Wong

Helen Ingham

Daniela Topham

Robert Milne

Mary Sheridan

Tracey Rose

Mariateresa Scarponi

Aurea Terribili

Valentina D'Ambrosia

Ronan Spelman

Steven Hawthorne

Claudia Grey

Corrina Askin

Athene Roy

Gianni Malpeli

John Zehntner

Louise Keating

Jim Southworth

Daisy Waddington

Benedict Lewis

Rosica Bakalov

Liz Knight

Chris Norris

Nick Harrop

Fabrice Langelier

Editors

Alex Rayment

Additional:

Mick Manning

Art Director

Paul Shardlow

Character Designer

Richard Fawdry

Special Effects

Peter Chiang

Designer/Animator:

Ljubomir Hristov

Artists:

Muriel MacLeod

Mathew Bell

Jan Philpot

Hilary Hayton

Peter Bird

Shadow Effects

Les Pace

Music

David Dundas

Rick Wentworth

Lyrics:

Don Black

Jon Acevski

David Ashton

Music Director

Nick Ingman

Orchestra Leader

Gavyn Wright

Orchestration

Rick Wentworth

Nick Ingman

Greig McRitchie

Peter Hope

Gordon Langford

Edward Shearmur

Additional:

Jonathan Sorrell

Executive Music Producer

David Simmons

Additional Music

Production Co-ordinators

Inger Best

Susanna Leissle

Music Editor

◀ When British national monuments, including the Tower of London and Buckingham Palace, begin to disappear into a mysterious dark cloud, top French Secret Service agent F.R.O.7. is summoned to Whitehall by the Brigadier. Freddie arrives, accepts the job, and departs for Ascot with his new sidekicks Daphne ("Daffers") and Scotty in search of the perpetrators. Escaping death at the hands of four assassins from the Snake organisation, Freddie overhears their radio instructions to return for the attack on Big Ben that night. To divert the Brigadier's attention, Freddie informs his two companions that Windsor Castle is the next target, and then leads them into Big Ben.

This is promptly sucked inside the snakelike aircraft carrying El Supremo and Messina. The aircraft itself disappears at the approach of British fighter planes, reappearing to enter a giant door in a hillside on Scotland's Isle of Worms. Discovering the agents inside Big Ben, El Supremo demonstrates "the power of the snake" by shrinking Big Ben with a ray and adding it to his collection of shrunken monuments. After revealing his scheme to weaken and then invade Britain, El Supremo lowers Freddie and Scotty into a watery pit containing prehistoric creatures while sparing Daffers for brainwashing purposes. He then unleashes his "maximum ray" to put Britain to sleep.

Freddie whistles for Nessie, who frightens away the monsters, and he sails off on her back to enlist her family's help in incapacitating the Snake's submarine fleet. Returning to the Isle of Worms, Freddie rescues Daffers and breaks into the chamber containing the shrunken landmarks; as El Supremo comes after Freddie with a sword, Daffers shrinks him with his own ray. After fighting off Messina and capturing El Supremo, Freddie returns to London, restores Buckingham Palace to full size, and refuses a knighthood. The White House phones Whitehall to request his services.

● With a title so inept it sounds more like a registration number, this self-styled "musical fantasy of a new kind" in fact derives from several obvious sources – among them song-punctuated Disney cartoons, James Bond movies, and the *Star Wars* series. The opening fairy-tale set-up, in which the human protagonist is reduced to a small talking frog (only to grow back to human size but remain a frog, apparently content with life as an amphibian), remains completely redundant, as demonstrated by Freddie's convenient but, in narrative terms, pointless flashbacks during his showdowns with El Supremo and Messina. The overall banality of the concept is the more irksome in that there's evidence of real talent in the animation. Extraneous, undeveloped story material linked with the stolen monuments conjures Britain's ancestral spirits as wraithlike figures tantalisingly animated in different coloured lines.

Jeremy Clarke

Honor Bound

USA 1989

Director: Jeannot Szwarc

Certificate

15

Distributor

Pacific Pictures

Production Company

FilmAccord Productions

Executive Producers

Daniel Marquet

Producers

Tim Van Rellim
Eric A. Weymueller

Associate Producer

Pat Wells

Production Supervisors

Boris Dmitrović

Berlin:

Willy Egger

Production Co-ordinators

Marilyse Morgan
Velinka Fičor

Berlin:

Gabi Scheiger

Production Managers

Yugoslavia:

Boris Gregoric

France:

Christian Fuin

Unit Managers

Paul Sparrow

Ranko Ganić

2nd Unit:

Steven Lawrence

Gorjan Tozija

Berlin:

Günther Russ

Location Managers

Zoran Blazević

Berlin:

Moritz Hänska

2nd Unit Director

Andy Armstrong

Casting

Penny Perry

US Associate:

Lori Tesoro

UK:

Mary Selway

France:

Nicole-Agnes Cattel

Yugoslavia:

Vlado Bačić

Assistant Directors

Chris Carreras

Marcia Gay

Dubhavko Scherr

Nebojsa Radić

2nd Unit:

Jean Marc Tostivint

Remy Burkel

Zdravko Madzarević

Berlin:

Eva Maria Schönecker

Screenplay

Aiken Woodruff

Based on the book

Recovery by Steven L.

Thompson

Director of Photography

Robert Stevens

Colour

Technicolor

2nd Unit Photography

Jean Orjollet

Camera Operators

Roger Pearce

2nd Unit:

Ivica Rajković

Editor

John Jympson

Production Designer

John Graysmark

Art Directors

Dusko Jerićević

Berlin:

Jan Schlubach

Set Decorator

Robyn Hamilton-Doney

Draughtswoman

Patricia Johnson

Sketch Artist

Roger Deck

Special Effects Supervisor

David Beavis

MUSIC

Mark Shreeve

MUSIC EDITOR

Dina Eaton

Songs

"Out in the Fields" by

and performed by Gary

Moore; "Blow Wind

Blow" by Alison Moyet,

Jeff Bailey, performed

by Alison Moyet; "Wait

for the Sunshine" by

and performed by

Richard Marx

Costume Design

Barbara Lane

Wardrobe

Jelena Matić

Drago Habazin

2nd Unit:

Sophie Saussier

Berlin:

Brigitte Freilander-

Rodriguez

Make-up

Supervisor:

Peter Robb King

2nd Unit:

Colette Kramer

Titles/Opticals

The Optical

Partnership

Sound Editor

Ron Davis

ADR Editor

Teddy Mason

Foley Editor

Alan Paley

Sound Recordists

Jean Louis Ducarme

Robin O'Donoghue

Dolby stereo

Consultants

Creative:

Melissa Ford

Military:

Marko Vrdoljak

Michael Christy

Duncan Wilmore III

Production Assistants

Joanna Robinson

Berlin:

Renate Brückner

Stunt Co-ordinators

Rémy Julienne

Yugoslavia:

Petar Buntić

Stunts

Fabrice Houy

Dominique Julienne

Michel Julienne

Jean Claude Houbart

Jean Jacques Vilain

Jean Louis Grim

Jean Pierre Gow

Marc Chamelot

Cast

John Philbin

Sergeant Max Young

Tom Skerritt

Sam Cahill

Gabrielle Lazure

Erika Tyler

George Dzundza

Wojcinski

Lawrence Pressman

Maxwell

Gene Davis

Chester Wind River

Eric Douglas

Lamar

Edward Meeks

Pearson

Hana Baczynska

Lady Attacker

Relja Bašić

Gorodnikov

Tibor Belisza

Ranko Zidarić

Ijarko Janeš

MLM Soldiers

Slavko Brankov

Gorodnikov's Driver

Bob Delell

Bates

Michael Hoffman

Gunther

Zdenko Jelčić

Gurkov

Slavko Juraga

Branko Meničanin

Siniša Miletić

Milan Plešaš

Danko Stazić

Russian Soldiers

Angus MacInnes

Jessup

Vincent Marzello

Hanley

Peda Petrović

Maxwell's Aide

Damir Saban

Duško Valentić

Ivica Zadro

VOPD Drivers

Andrea Sario

Gorodnikov's Wife

Richard D. Sharp

Ray Tanner

Cliff Taylor

Interrogator

Burnell Tucker

Steele

Janez Vajavec

Illyushur

Tim Van Rellim

East German Border

Guard

Hermann Swerger

Alex

9,213 feet

102 minutes

● 1989, US Military Liaison Mission, Potsdam, East Germany. When a key US satellite monitoring the Soviet disarmament process suffers a temporary breakdown, weapons specialist Sam Cahill immediately summons Sergeant Max Young from training at NATO's anti-terrorist motoring school in Utrecht. Cahill instructs him to drive a special MLM surveillance car in which they are to penetrate East German territory and keep tabs on the Soviet military. That night at a party hosted by the US Mission, Cahill introduces Young to attractive artist Erika Tyler, whom he later drives to her flat in nearby Berlin.

In the meantime, however, as the Americans monitor a flurry of radio communications coming from the Soviet missile installation at Wurzem, the Soviet officers present at the function make their excuses and leave. On Young's return to base, he and Cahill swiftly set out for Wurzem to investigate the cause of the evening's disturbance. Bedding down for the night in the woods, Cahill reveals that he failed Young from the Military Intelligence Service because he did not consider him officer material.

The next morning as he climbs a surveillance tower inside the restricted central compound, Cahill is fatally wounded by an unknown gunman. Attempting to evade his Soviet trackers, Young himself is captured and interrogated by the KGB. But before they can ascertain how much he knows, they're required to hand him and his partner's body over to the Americans. Feeling in some measure responsible for Cahill's murder, Young storms out of the infirmary at US Intelligence Headquarters, and after first seeking Erika's support, sets about returning to Wurzem to find out the truth.

Reaching the Soviet base by motorbike, he discovers that it has in fact been virtually destroyed by an accidental missile explosion. With Soviet and East German authorities in hot pursuit, he makes it back to Potsdam with this information. Yet both super powers agree that the entire incident is best hushed up, leaving the Soviets to make a formal apology for Cahill's

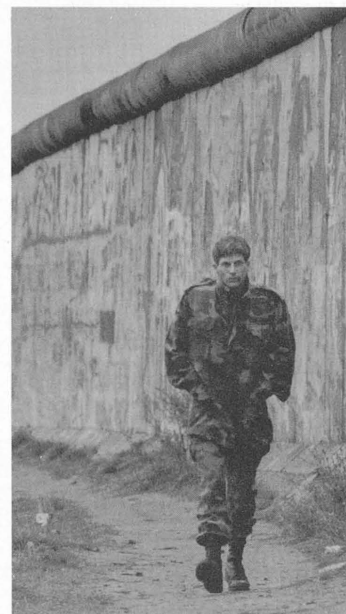
death and the disenchanted Young to quit the army for an emotional reunion with Erika.

● A further venture into East Germany after his 1982 spy thriller *Enigma*, Jeannot Szwarc's routine actioner has of course been left high and dry by the altered political realities of the past decade (and by its belated and very limited British release). As in John Frankenheimer's *The Fourth War*, the slackening of super-power tension is compensated for by a local, personalised conflict; one which may be distinctly out of sync with post-Glasnost foreign policy but whose portrayal of courageous foot soldiers constrained by the diplomatic niceties of peacetime has become a virtual convention in such tales of US military derring-do.

Honor Bound is notable, however, in two respects. One is the exploitation of Chernobyl-inspired nuclear safety worries as a central narrative device. And the other is that our hero, dismayed by the new spirit of US-Soviet co-operation which ensures a cover-up of the Wurzem missile incident, resigns from his post at the end. This is a familiar enough gesture of the lone, just man retaining his sense of 'honour' while all about him is pragmatic compromise. Yet it's also an admission that there's little celluloid mileage left in the old Cold War paranoia, which is underlined by the paucity of invention on display in the rest of the film.

Mounted with the barest minimum of resources (the nuclear explosion happens off-screen, its aftermath pictured in the most rudimentary matte shot), this is the sort of film where the East German officials conveniently evoke duplicity of both the Commie and the Nazi variety. And for the most part, a major super-power incident is cheerfully reduced to two teams of Lada cars interminably chasing each other through a rural location which the end credits reveal is actually Yugoslavia.

Trevor Johnston



Little mileage left: John Philbin

Lethal Weapon 3

USA 1992

Director: Richard Donner

Certificate

15

Distributor

Warner Bros
Production Company
Warner Bros
A Silver Pictures
production

Producers

Richard Donner
Joel Silver

Co-producers

Steve Perry
Jenny Lew Tugend

Associate Producers

Alexander B. Collett
Michael E. Klastorin

Unit Production Manager

Steve Perry

Location Managers

Paul Pav
Michael J. Burmeister
Janice Polley
Deborah Page

Post-production

Supervisor

Geno Escarrega

2nd Unit Director

Steve Perry

Casting

Marion Dougherty
Associate:

Owens Hill

Assistant Directors

Michael Alan Kahn
Gregory Kent Simmons
Warren D. Gray
Robert J. Smawley

Screenplay

Jeffrey Boam
Robert Mark Kamen

Story

Jeffrey Boam
Based on characters
created by Shane Black

Director of Photography

Jan De Bont
Panavision

Colour

Technicolor

2nd Unit Photography

Alexander Witt

Camera Operators

Michael Scott
2nd Unit:

Aaron Pazanti

Steadicam Operator

Gregory Lundsgaard

Editors

Robert Brown
Battle Davis

Additional:

Dallas S. Puett

Production Designer

James Spencer

Art Director

Greg Papalia

Set Design

Mark Poll

Set Decorator

Richard Goddard

Special Effects Supervisor

Matt Sweeney

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Jon G. Belyeu

Special Effects Foreman

Bob Stoker

Special Effects

William Aldridge
Chris L. Burton

R. Mike Bisetti

Ken Ebert

Larry Fuentes

Don Hathaway

Greg Jensen

Bruce Kuroyama

Steve Luport

J.C. Machit

Arnie Peterson

Steve Purcell

Paul Sabourin

Jim Schwalm

Hal Selig

Lucinda Strub

Frederick H. Tessaro

Structural Implosion:

Controlled Demolition
International

Music

Michael Kamen
Eric Clapton
David Sanborn

Orchestrations

Michael Kamen
William Ross

Jonathan Sacks

Music Producer

Stephen McLaughlin

Supervising Music Editor

Christopher S. Brooks

Music Editor

Eric Reasoner

Songs

"It's Probably Me"

by Michael Kamen,
Eric Clapton, Sting,

performed by Sting,
Eric Clapton;

"Runaway Train"

by Elton John, Bernie

Taupin, Olle Romo,

performed by Elton

John, Eric Clapton;

"It's So Hard to Say

Goodbye to Yesterday"

by Christine Yarian,

Freddie Perren,

performed by Boyz II

Men; "Latin Lingo" by

Lawrence Muggerd,

Louis Freeze, Senen

Reyes, performed by

Cypress Hill; "The

Three Stooges Theme"

Costume Supervisor

Nick Scarano

Costumers

Nava Sadan

Women:

Lori Stilson

Mel Gibson:

Brian Callahan

Danny Glover:

Michael Voght

Make-up

Supervisor:

Scott H. Eddo

Artist: Richard Snell

Title Design

Greenberg &

Schluter Inc.

Titles/Opticals

Perpetual Motion

Pictures

Supervising Sound Editor

Robert G. Henderson

Sound Editors

Bub Asman

Virginia Cook-

McGowan

Bruce Lacey

Samuel C. Crutcher

J. Dranch

Joe Morrissey

Darrin V. Martin

Robb Wilson

David L. Horton Jnr

Scot Tinsley

David M. Horton

Jayne S. Parker

Greg Dillon

Allen Hartz

James J. Klinger

Brooke Henderson-

Ward

Barbara Gandolfo-

Frady

Solange S. Boisseau

Christopher Flick

Joseph A. Mosca

Supervising ADR Editor

James Simcik

ADR Editors

Richard Friedman

Corrine Sessarego

Robert Gustan Ulrich

Petra Bach

Lisa Risen

Sound Recordist

Thomas Causey

ADR Recordists

Dean Drabin

Anne Haskell

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Wayne Artman
Frank Jones
Tom Dahl

Technical Advisers

Art Fransen

Hockey:

Edward T. Hanley

Stunt Co-ordinators

Charlie Picerni
Mic Rodgers

Stunts

Gregory Barnett

Bobby Bass

Sandy Berumen

Steve Boyum

Janet Brady

Tony Brubaker

Steve Chambers

Jeff Dashnow

Jadie David

Tim A. Davison

Cheryl Wheeler-Dixon

Shane Dixon

Sparky Edmunston

Tony Epper

Roy Farfel

Bill Hart

Billy Hank Hooker

Buddy Joe Hooker

Thomas J. Huff

Matt Johnston

Cher Meier

John Meier

Bennie Moore

Frank Orsatti

Manny Perry

Charles Picerni Jnr

Paul Picerni

Steve Picerni

Chad Randall

Danny Rogers

Michael Runyard

Tim Trella

Chris Tuck

Dick Ziker

Animal Trainers

Gary Gero

William Grisco

Teresa Miller

Cast

Mel Gibson

Martin Riggs

Danny Glover

Roger Murtaugh

Joe Pesci

Leo Getz

Rene Russo

Lorna Cole

Stuart Wilson

Jack Travis

Steve Kahan

Captain Murphy

Darlene Love

Trish Murtaugh

Traci Wolfe

Rianne Murtaugh

Damon Hines

Nick Murtaugh

Ebonie Smith

Carrie Murtaugh

Gregory Millar

Tyrone

Nick Chinlund

Hatchett

Jason Meshover-Jorg

Young Cop

Alan Scarfe

Robb Walters

Delores Hall

Delores

Mary Ellen Trainor

Stephanie Woods

Mark Pellegrino

Billy Phelps

John Cenatiempo

Smitty

Danny Wynands

Hershel

Andrew Hill Newman

Jaywalker

Kenneth Tigar

Ernie/Detective

Pete Antico

Henchman/Hubie

Sven-Ole Thorsen

Paul Tuerpe

Henchmen

Ronnie Alicino

Henry Brown

Eric Briant Wells

Miguel Nunez

Philip Moon

Squad Members

Bobby Wynn

Darryl

Sylvia Webb White

Darryl's Mother

Danny Big Black

Darryl's Father

Vincent Howard

Preacher

Paul Hipp

Doctor

Lauren Shuler-Donner

Nurse

Stephen T. Kay

Movie Director

Michael George Miller

Movie Assistant

Director

Henry Kingi

Movie Gun Punk

Adam Klineberg

Movie Cop

Michelle Landry

Young Woman

Scott M. Bryce

Young Man

Del Emory

Showery Cop

John Harms

Cop

Masala

Canada 1991

Director: Srinivas Krishna

Certificate

18

Distributor

Metro Pictures

Production Company

Divani Films

With the participation

of Téléfilm Canada/

Ontario Film

Development

Corporation/

Ontario Arts Council

Producers

Srinivas Krishna

Camelia Freiberg

Production Co-ordinator

Barbara Bell

Production Managers

Camelia Frieberg

Sandra Cunningham

Unit Manager

Chris Emmanouilides

Location Manager

Mark Moore

2nd Unit Director

Camelia Frieberg

Casting

Linda Continenza

Extras:

Linda Continenza

Ryna Schickler

Paul E. Jackson

International:

Jennifer Jaffrey

Assistant Directors

Richard Flower

Ani Baravayan

Penny Charter

Joanne Tickle

Screenplay

Srinivas Krishna

Director of Photography

Paul Sarossy

In colour

Camera Operators

2nd Unit:

Maurizio Belli

Mark Willis

Video Playback

Cliff Lopes

Editor

Michael Munn

Co-editor

Srinivas Krishna

Production Designer

Tamara Deverell

Art Director

Valerie Kaelin

Set Decorator

Alexa Anthony

Set Dressers

Michael McShane

Carolyn Gee

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

John Gajdecki

Music

The West India

Company

Leslie Winston

Music Editor

Alan Geldart

Songs

"Rita's Song" by R. D.

Burman, Pandit

Dinesh, Stephen

Luscombe, Hope

Augustus, performed

by The West India

Company, Hope

Augustus, Asha Bhosle,

R. D. Burman, Pandit

Dinesh, Peter Culshaw,

Stephen Luscombe,

Shiamak Davar; "Lallu

Bhai" by Pandit Dinesh,

Stephen Luscombe,

Peter Culshaw,

performed by The West

India Company, Pandit

Dinesh, Peter Culshaw,

Stephen Luscombe,

with Vinod Pandit,

Sudersna Pandit,

Medha Kapur, Ratah

Sharma, (voice) Saeed

Jaffrey

Choreography

Johanika Roth

Costume Design

Beth Pasternak

Wardrobe

Sheila Pruden

Annie Nikolajevich

Make-up

Nicole Demers

Extra:

Carol Powell

Sylvain Cournoyer

Steven Lynch

Titles/Opticals

Film Effects

Title Treatment

James Paterson

Supervising Sound Editor

Steve Munro

Sound Editor

Dialogue:

Sue Conley

ADR Editor

Sue Conley

Sound Recordists

Ross Redfern

Foley:

Alex King

George Novotny

ADR:

Steve Munro

Music:

(London)

Nick Young

(Bombay)

Kevin Petrie

Martin Gordon

Sound Re-recordists

Film House:

Daniel Pellerin

Peter Kelly

Sound Effects Editors

Alan Geldart

David Taylor

Foley Artist

Sid Lieberman

Production Assistants

Erika Schengili

John Young

Kenneth Hsu

Alexandra Davies

Ann van Messel

Stunt Co-ordinator

Ken Quinn

Doubles

Saeed Jaffrey:

Namir Khan

Chris Emmanouilides

Pierot Fazzolari

Stunt Doubles

Kim Nelson

John Anceriz

Animal Wrangler

Rick Parker

Dog Handler

Barbara Bell

Cast

Srinivas Krishna

Krishna

Sakina Jaffrey

Rita

Zohra Segal

Grandma

Saeed Jaffrey

Lallu Bhai/

Mr Tikkoo/

Lord Krishna

Heri Johal

Anil

Madhuri Bhatia

Bibi

Ronica Sajjani

Sashi

Les Porter

Gerald

Ishwarlal M. Mooljee

Bahadur Singh

Raju Ahsan

Babu

Jennifer Armstrong

Lisa

Wayne Bowman

Balrama

Don Callaghan

John MacDonald

Paul Persofsky

Lawyer

Sachin Bannerjee

Mr Chhabra

Ran Ghoman

Pinky

Sakuntala Krishna

Krishna's Mother

Avi Kulkarni

Krishna's Father

Kamran Durrani

Krishna's Brother

Tova Gallimore

Srawati

Mervyn Mingail

Mr Varma

Summathi Thimmana

Mrs Varma

Janet Joy Wilson

Lieutenant Hilary

Macintyre

Sunil "Sunny" Roy

Priest

Christofer Williamson

Ari Moses

Michael Theriault

Bullies

Lakshmi Thimmana

Fruit Stand Proprietor

Ramana Tangirala

Television Announcer

Robin Severin

Valery Pappadooglio

Anne Scanlon

Lisa's Mother

Garth Holding

Lisa's Man

Bill Jay

Mountie Captain

Vivek Mathur

Sikh

Bob Waugh

Bus Driver

Tibor Skoric

Priest in Plane

Sangita Viswanathan

Stewardess

Judith Brunner

Gertrude

Valery Boyce

Aerobics Instructor

Susan Henry

Voice of Aerobics

Instructor

Frank Mullen

Postal Sorter

Paul Jolly

Postal Driver

John Healy

Colleague

Chris Emmanouilides

Postman

"Adela"

Winston the Bichon

Frise

9,518 feet

106 minutes

When an Air India plane blows up en route from Toronto to India, Krishna's parents and brother are killed. Five years later, Krishna is released from jail having undergone a heroin detox régime. After failing to collect a debt from his junkie ex-girlfriend, Krishna crashes a party at the home of his uncle, Lallu Bhai, to celebrate closer cultural ties between the Indian and Canadian communities. Also present are Sashi and Rita, the two daughters of Lallu Bhai's cousin, Mr Tikkoo. Spending the night at his uncle's, Krishna is determined not to relapse into drug dependency, but finds it hard to get a job, even at the post office where Mr Tikkoo (a keen philatelist) works. While wandering the streets, he is reminded of childhood racist abuse by an unpleasant encounter with white Canadian teenagers.

Meanwhile, Tikkoo's mother, a devout Hindu, develops a dialogue with the god Krishna via her video recorder. Granting her wish for an economic miracle, he engineers the mistaken delivery of a priceless stamp to the Tikkoo household. Grandma's dreams seem about to be realised, but the scrupulously honest Tikkoo refuses to sell the stamp; he also decides to take legal action to prevent it being reclaimed by the Canadian government. He is forced to borrow money from Rita, who works at an acquaintance's travel agency (Tikkoo assumes she is saving the money for a university education, but her ambition is to become a pilot). When Lallu asks the same agent to give Krishna a job, he and Rita meet again and are immediately attracted to each other.

Although his job is shortlived, Krishna returns home with Rita and the pair make love in Tikkoo's house. Lallu Bhai agrees to let a Sikh professor, Bahadur Singh, use the basement of his shop to promote the establishment of an independent state (Khalistan) in India. Although he suspects that terrorists may be involved, Lallu is swayed by the promise of exclusive

merchandising rights in Khalistan. Unbeknownst to both of them, the Canadian Mounties have been keeping the shop, and the constant traffic of Sikhs, under observation. On the day that the local Hindu community are set to celebrate a religious festival, the Sikhs plan to send a 'shipment' to India. But the Mounties surround Lallu Bhai's shop and a warrant is put out for his arrest.

Oblivious to all this, Lallu tries to buy the stamp from his cousin during the procession, while Krishna, having rejected Rita's wish for a more permanent relationship and resolved to leave Toronto, decides to return. Lallu is arrested and the Sikh shipment is successfully intercepted; the authorities are embarrassed, however, when the contents turn out to be rolls of toilet paper. Tikkoo becomes curator at the first National Canadian Centre of Philately, Rita pursues her pilot's studies, and Lallu Bhai becomes a highly respected and powerful business figure. But Krishna, who is just about to be reunited with Rita, is stabbed to death by one of the racist teenagers he had encountered earlier.

As the Air India flight on its way to the sub-continent explodes in mid-air, leaving the hero of *Masala* orphaned and land-locked, it is tempting to recall Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, which also used a stratospheric disaster to set up its tale of cross-cultural tribulation. Rushdie, in fact, has already been invoked in the uneasy stirrings that *Masala's* irreverent portrayal of the Hindu gods have caused among Canadian Hindus. But, even though *Masala* may never achieve nationwide distribution in India, it is unlikely to provoke calls for a fatwa against its Canadian writer-director-star Srinivas Krishna. Hinduism, unlike Islam, does not condemn visual representation (a 1976 bio-pic of Muhammed never actually portrayed him on screen), and the Hindu gods have already been fleshed out on Indian television in the massive multi-part *Mahabharata*.

If there is offence in the profane portrayal here of Krishna ("I'm no bloody Christian God. I don't have to prove my credentials" is his riposte to Grandma Tikkoo when she asks for a miracle to prove his identity), then it's in the eye of the individual believer, rather than a fundamental blasphemy. The real adventurousness of Krishna (the director) is the way he adapts the conventions of Bombay's Hindi cinema, casts a new light on second-generation immigrant angst, and avoids (with one or two minor exceptions) stereotyping his characters. (The only nod to received Western attitudes is the now *de rigueur* condemnation of Asian men.)

But unlike *Mississippi Masala* or *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Masala* acknowledges its debt to 'Bollywood' as well as Hollywood. The two garishly over-the-top musical numbers, which on the surface seem completely superfluous, indicate the way carnal urges have tra-

ditionally been sublimated in Hindi cinema through fantasies. The fact that these same characters go on to have relatively explicit sexual dreams as well only underlines the 'freedom' now available to Asian film-makers as well as their audiences. The character traits that supply the film's rather absurdist plot are accessible enough in movie terms, while they also have their native 'truth': Grandma Tikkoo's communication with Krishna via the VCR cannily acknowledges the device's importance as home entertainment for an older generation of Asians; the 'contrivances' of Rita working in the same travel shop as Krishna, or the Sikh professor asking to use Lallu Bhai's basement, accurately reflect the close-knit, interdependent world of Asian communities in foreign lands.

Krishna distances himself in this respect from his trans-Atlantic cousin, Hanif Kureishi. His portrayal of bourgeois Canadian Asians doesn't carry the same charge of betrayal as Kureishi's view of their Thatcherite counterparts. As played by Saeed Jaffrey (who was the smoothly corrupt Uncle Nasser in *My Beautiful Laundrette*), Lallu's materialism is tempered with an acknowledgment that he is also striving for respectability and pride via commercial success. Having covered the home bases effectively, Krishna furiously criss-crosses his personal preoccupations and cultural references to stimulating effect.

With an original brief that was supposed to incorporate "

Night on Earth

USA 1991

Director: Jim Jarmusch

Certificate

15

Distributor

Electric Pictures

Production Company

Locus Solus

In association with

Victor Company/Victor

Musical

Industries/Pyramide/

La Studio Canal Plus/

Pandora Film/

Channel 4

Executive Producer

Jim Stark

Co-Executive Producers

P. Masahiro Inbe

Noburu Tokayama

Producer

Jim Jarmusch

Co-producer

Demetra J. MacBride

Line producer

Rudd Simmons

Production Co-ordinator

Birgit Staudt

Los Angeles:

Susan O'Leary

Production Managers

Los Angeles:

Susan Shapiro

New York:

Kathie Hersch

Paris:

Gilles Sacuto

Rome:

Manuela Pinesici-

Berger

Helsinki:

Pauli Pentti

Unit Manager

New York:

William H. Watkins

Location Managers

Los Angeles:

Joe McDougall

New York:

Daniel Sirol

2nd Unit:

Nathan Gendzier

Casting

New York:

(Extras)

Susan Shopmaker

Assistant Directors

Los Angeles:

Terence J. Edwards

Susan O'Leary

New York:

Howard McMaster

Todd Pfeiffer Roni

Ben-Nevat

Paris:

Jeanne Marie

de la Fontaine

Olivier Coutard

Rome:

Joseph Rochlitz

Helsinki:

Klaus Heydemann

Screenplay

Jim Jarmusch

Director of Photography

Frederick Elmes

In colour

Steadicam Operator

Daniel Kneec

Editor

Jay Rabinowitz

Set Decorator

Johan Le Tenoux

Music

Tom Waits

Music Adviser

Jim Solet

Music Performed by

Horns:

Ralph Carney

Cello:

Matthew Brubeck

Guitar:

Joe Gore

Bass:

Clark Suprynowitz

Accordion:

Josef Brinckmann

Percussion:

Mule Patterson

Keyboards:

Frances Thumm

Songs

"Back in the Good

Old World", "Good Old

World" by Tom Waits,

Kathleen Brennan,

performed by Tom

Waits; "Cycle-Delic" by

Davie Allan, performed

by Davie Allan and the

Arrows; "Summertime

Blues" by Eddie

Cochran, Jerry

Capehart, performed

by Blue Cheer

Costume Design

Los Angeles:

Barbara Gordon

New York:

Alexandra Elker

Paris:

Claire Fraisse

Rome:

Magda Java

Helsinki:

Tina Seppo

Make-up

Los Angeles:

Christina Smith

Gina Belafonte

New York:

Meredith Soupios

Paris:

Catherine

Demesmaecker

Rome:

Pietro Tonoglio

Titles

Balsmeyer & Everett

Sound Design

Anthony (Chic)

Ciccolini III

Sound Editors

Dialogue:

Thomas A. Gulino

Stuart Stanley

Foley Editor

Richard Q. King

Sound Recordists

Location:

Drew Kunin

New York 2nd Unit:

Felipe Jorrero

Foley:

George A. Lara

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Dominick Tavella

Sound Effects Editor

Eugene Gearty

Foley Artists

Elisha Birnbaum

Brian Vancho

Production Assistants

Los Angeles:

Mark Hunshik Choi

Eugene Hess

Danny Kaufman

Lucy Pollak

Molly van Vlec

Mandan Yamin

New York:

Simon Eggleton

Mark Frazier

Michele de Lorimer

Gary Frances Minor

Edward Pollard

Antonio Ponti

Leo Santos

Yvonne Woods

Paris:

Eric Bassoff

Gilles Charmant

Nathalie Herr

Didier Landureau

Jean Claude Lothier

Stunt Co-ordinator

Rome:

Riccardo Petrazzi

Stunts

Rome:

Ciampiero

Comanducci

Subtitles

DuArt

Cast

Winona Ryder

Corky

Gena Rowlands

Victoria Snelling

Giancarlo Esposito

YoYo

Armin Mueller-Stahl

Helmut Groekenberger

Rosie Perez

Angela

Isaach De Bankolé

Driver

Béatrice Dalle

Blind Woman

Roberto Benigni

Gino

Paolo Bonacelli

Priest

Matti Pellonpää

Mika

Kari Väänänen

Sakari Kuosmanen

Tomi Salmela

Men

Lisanne Falk

Rock Manager

Alan Randolph Scott.I

Anthony Portillo

Rock Musicians

Richard Boes

Cab Driver

Emile Abessolo-M'B

Pascal Nzonzi

Passengers

Stephane Boucher

Man in Accident

Noel Kaufmann

Man on Motorcycle

Gianni Schettino

Antonino Ragusa

Transvestites

Nicola Facondo

Camilla Begnoni

Lovers

Romolo Di Biaso

Angry Driver

Donatella Servadio

Ella Vilpas

Voices of Dispatchers

Jaakko Talaskivi

Klaus Heydemann

Factory Workers

11,577 feet

129 minutes

Partly subtitled

Five encounters take place simultaneously in five cities around the world. Los Angeles, 7.07pm: After dropping two rock stars at the airport VIP terminal, Corky, a young woman cab driver, picks up casting agent Victoria Snelling. En route for her home in Beverly Hills, Victoria decides that the feisty Corky would be ideal for the part she is casting, and suggests she try for it. Corky, determined to be a mechanic, demurs.

New York, 10.07pm: Trying to get a cab home to Brooklyn, YoYo, a young black man, is picked up by an inept middle-aged cabbie, and ends up offering to drive himself. The cabbie introduces himself as Helmut Groekenberger, a former circus clown from East Germany. En route, YoYo picks up his fiery sister-in-law Angela, and they argue all the way home. On arrival, YoYo solicitously gives Helmut directions back, but the cabbie gets lost.

Paris, 4.07am: A taxi driver from the Ivory Coast throws two troublesome African passengers out of his cab. He picks up a young blind woman and, quizzing her, is amazed to find her far more capable of orienting herself in the world than he had expected. As she walks off, the distracted driver crashes into another car.

Rome, 4.07am: Gino, an anarchic cab driver, picks up a priest and insists on making a confession, recounting his sexual exploits with a pumpkin, a sheep, and his sister-in-law, stopping en route to greet some transvestite prostitutes. When the priest dies of a heart attack, the distraught Gino leaves the body on a bench.

Helsinki, 5.07am: Mika, a cab driver, picks up three drunken, depressed men, one of whom, Aki, is in a stupor. The other two explain that he has just lost his job, had his new car wrecked, discovered his daughter is pregnant and been driven out by his wife. In return, Mika tells them how he and his wife lost their baby. They leave Aki to regain consciousness on the pavement outside his home as day breaks.

At night and in taxis, lives are temporarily suspended and stories are told, just as in cinema. The taxi

– the venue *par excellence* of chance meetings – would seem to be the ideal setting for a director whose stock-in-trade is the chance encounter between ill-matched types. But the encounters in *Night on Earth* are not as arbitrary as they seem, and Jarmusch's selections have clearly been made with particular criteria in mind: a radical clash of opposites in Los Angeles; a worldly motormouth and a stately silent foil in Rome; a newcomer to America meeting a quintessentially seedy New York pair; and in Paris, a pairing designed to illustrate the message that colour doesn't matter (especially at night?) and that the blind see better than the sighted.

Jarmusch fans will certainly relish the fact that the stories feature no neat closing twists. The encounters (except in the case of the hapless priest) leave no traces at all; none of the participants is likely to be transformed by them, and most will probably have forgotten them by morning. The similarly segmented *Mystery Train* had more narrative inter-complexity, and it is disappointing that the only continuity between the stories here is the purely formal one of the setting. But Jarmusch is less interested in making narrative points than he is in placing himself in a kind of cinematic universe, evoked by homage: Gena Rowlands inevitably recalls Cassavetes and his attempt to make a cinema with a direct purchase on the real world; Roberto Benigni, a Jarmusch regular with his manic, obnoxious persona, gets to swim in his own element; Giancarlo Esposito and Rosie Perez are 'ambassadors' from the universe of Spike Lee, and the Finns from that of Aki Kaurismäki, whose lugubriousness Jarmusch outdoes in spades.

In lieu of narrative depth, the film's visual and dramatic uniformity becomes its entire *raison d'être*. The film was shot on location in taxis, with special lighting apparatus, and cameras replacing engines, making the film more elaborately artifice than its easy realism would suggest. That five cab-bound narratives should allow for this much visual variety is remarkable, even bearing in mind the painstakingly banal city shots (shops, aban-

doned cars, parking lots) with which the interiors are punctuated. This is also a film about the world being projected into an enclosed interior (of course, it's tempting to see the taxi as a little mobile camera), with the light from outside breaking up the uniformity of the interiors. It's fun, also, to imagine one's own variations on the formula: a Madrid ride à la Almodóvar, for instance, which would have disrupted the monotony with some nice leopard-skin fittings.

The stories are linked by a knowingly artificial framing structure. The film opens with a rocking globe in space, which comes nearer until we can see its geographic details, and for every episode, the camera zooms in on one of five synchronised clocks, which wind back 35 minutes to the next starting point (each sequence actually lasts between 20 and 24 minutes). But the formal continuity is not enough to balance the inconsequentiality of the narratives, and this places undue weight on the cast. It means that particular actors' mannerisms (and the viewer's subjective response to them) can unbalance the film unduly. What is pleasing is a sense of the film being set in the real world, not just in the way Jarmusch shows the cities in all their workaday banality, but in his readiness to adapt his language to that of other directors and cultures.

The humour of the Paris-African ambience is something genuinely alien to American cinema, and there's real generosity in the way Jarmusch allows the passengers' best joke to be one that loses in subtitled translation: learning where the driver is from, they pun, "Ivorien! Il voit rien!" ("He can't see a thing!"). The film finally ties up as day breaks and we're reminded that, back at the beginning, night is about to fall in LA. This sense of circularity just about motivates the film, with the idea that the eternal motion of taxis keeps the world spinning. But it's a thin philosophical pay-off. A film in which people talk to keep themselves amused in transit clearly runs the risk of being one that does no more than amuse its audience en route from start to finish.

Jonathan Romney



A place in the universe: Armin Mueller-Stahl

Noises Off

USA 1992

Director: Peter Bogdanovich

Certificate
15
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Companies
Touchstone Pictures/
Amblin Entertainment
In association with
Touchwood Pacific
Partners I
Executive Producers
Kathleen Kennedy
Peter Bogdanovich
Producer
Frank Marshall
Co-producer
Steve Starkey
Associate Producers
Joan Bradshaw
L.B. Straten
Production Associate
Iris Chester
Production Controller
Bonne Radford
Production Co-ordinator
Jacqueline A. Shea
Unit Production Manager
Joan Bradshaw
Location Manager
Brian O. Haynes
Post-production Supervisor
Bradley Goodman
2nd Unit Director
Frank Marshall
Casting
Additional:
Mike Fenton
Allison Cowitt
Extras:
Central Casting
Assistant Directors
Jerry Ketcham
Ian Foster Woolf
Zia Iampietro
2nd Unit:
Artist Robinson
Screenplay
Marty Kaplan
Based on the play
by Michael Frayn
Director of Photography
Tim Suhrstedt
Colour
Technicolor
2nd Unit Photography
Don Burgess
Camera Operators
Norman G. Langley
Chris Squires
Additional:
Jack Anderson
Editors
Lisa Day
Additional:
Brian Berdan
Associate Editor
Ronald David Krehel
Production Designer
Norman Newberry
Art Director
Daniel E. Maltese
Set Design
Richard F. McKenzie
Set Decorator
Jim Duffy
Set Dressers
Oscar X. Delgadillo
Michael B. Westcott
Kenneth A. Heil
Special Effects
David Blitstein
Music Adaptations
Phil Marshall
Music Performed by
George Doering
Chuck Domanico
Gary Grant
Dan Higgins
Michael Lang
Harvey Mason
Tom Ranier
Jack Sheldon
Music Editor
Tom Carlson
Songs
"Broadway Melody"
by Arthur Freed, Nacio

Herb Brown, "There's
No Business Like Show
Business" by Irving
Berlin, performed by
Niki Harris; "Another
Op'nin' Another Show"
by Cole Porter; "Lullaby
of Broadway" by Harry
Warren, Al Dubin;
"With a Little Help
From My Friends"
by John Lennon,
Paul McCartney
Costume Design
Betsy Cox
Costume Supervisor
Rosalie Wallace
Costumers
Marion Kirk
Rosalynda Wold
Key Make-up Artists
Anthony S. Lloyd
Brenda Todd
Make-up Artists
James Lee McCoy
Body:
Cynthia K. Blake
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editor
Richard L. Anderson
Sound Editors
James Christopher
Mike Chock
Charles E. Smith
Supervising ADR Editor
Alan Nineberg
Sound Recordists
James E. Webb
Music:
John Richards
Tim Jaquette
ADR Recordist
Charlene Richards
ADR Group
L.A. Maddogs
Newell Alexander
Rosemary Alexander
Mitch Carter
David Cowgill
Ike Eisenmann
Dominic Hoffman
Tawny Moyer
Jan Rabson
Dennis Tufano
Lynnanne Zager
Foley Recordist
Ron Bedrosian
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Rick Alexander
James Bolt
Andy D'Addario
Alberto Romero
Foley Artist
Vanessa T. Ament
Technical Adviser
Elizabeth Cameron
Technical Co-ordinator
Tommy Thompson
Production Assistants
Roby Marshall
Win Edson
Brian Pulaski
Marc Ramer
Joseph E. Januszewski
Stunt Co-ordinator
Charlie Croughwell
Stand-ins
Carol Burnett:
Susan Kussman
Michael Caine:
Robert Armstrong
Denholm Elliott:
Dick Corman
Julie Hagerty:
Wendy Wilson
Marilu Henner:
Dana Marley
Mark Linn-Baker:
Joe Hanna
Christopher Reeve:
Matthew Robert
Gottlieb
John Ritter:
Roger Michelson
Nicollette Sheridan:
Rosie DeSanctis

Cast
Carol Burnett
Dotty Otley/
Mrs Clackett
Michael Caine
Lloyd Fellowes
Denholm Elliott
Selsdon Mowbray/
Burglar
Julie Hagerty
Poppy Taylor
Marilu Henner
Belinda Blair/
Flavia Brent
Mark Linn-Baker
Tim Allgood
Christopher Reeve
Frederick Dallas/
Philip Brent
John Ritter
Garry Lejeune/
Roger Tramplemain
Nicollette Sheridan
Brooke Ashton/Vicki
Kate Rich
Des Moines Stagehand
Zoe R. Cassavetes
Miami Stagehand
Kim Sebastian
Cleveland Stagehand
L.B. Straten
Broadway Stagehand
J. Christopher Sullivan
Miami Backstage
Guard

Kimberly Neville
Miami Usher
Cleveland O'Neal
Miami Electrician
Roger Michelson
Company Lighting
Technician
Joe Hanna
Company Soundman
Rosie DeSanctis
Miami Backstage
Visitor
Jack McCall
Keith Crowningshield
Andrew Mapp
Broadway Ushers
Dianna Agostini
Broadway Theatregoer
Bronson Dudley
NY Curb Bum
Drummond Erskine
NY Backstage Doorman
Roger Armstrong
Dick Corman
Des Moines Additional
Stagehands
Wendy Wilson
Matthew Robert Gottlieb
Dana Marley
Miami Additional
Stagehands

9,360 feet
104 minutes

As the curtain rises on the Broadway premiere of the British sex farce *Nothing On*, its director, Lloyd Fellowes, convinced he has a total flop on his hands, recalls the catastrophic events of the play's pre-Broadway American tour...

On the eve of the US premiere in Des Moines, the cast struggle erratically through a last-minute rehearsal of Act I. Dotty Otley, the leading lady, constantly muddles her stage business, despite the help of Garry Lejeune, her co-star and off-stage lover. The handsome but dense Frederick Dallas keeps stopping to discuss his motivation. Brooke Ashton, the myopic ingénue, is given to losing her contact lenses, while the decrepit Selsdon Mowbray misses his cues as much through deafness as drunkenness.

Lloyd's efforts to keep the show afloat are supported by the remaining cast member, Belinda Blair, and the put-upon backstage staff Tim Allgood and Poppy Taylor. Matters are complicated, though, by Lloyd running simultaneous affairs with both Poppy and Brooke. After leaving the company to direct Shakespeare in New York, Lloyd rejoins the production in Miami for a matinée. Internal tensions are now rampant, with Garry accusing Dotty of two-timing him with Frederick, Poppy wretched over Lloyd's affair with Brooke, and Selsdon secreting bottles in every possible hiding place.

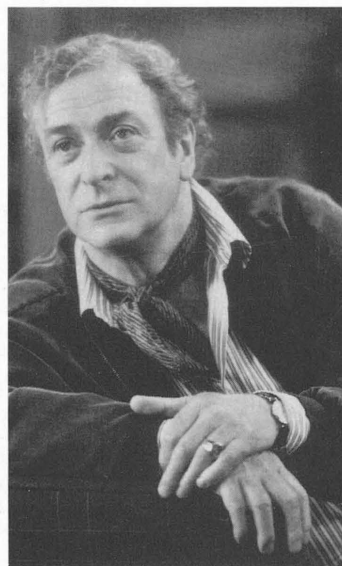
Backstage jealousies finally erupt into sabotage and violence and the play falls apart; at the first-act curtain, Poppy audibly proclaims she is pregnant. By the time the play reaches Cleveland, it has degenerated into an incoherent shambles, with the cast increasingly indifferent to the consequences... On Broadway, Lloyd despondently returns to the theatre, only to find the audience applauding wildly at the final curtain. Jealousies and feuds forgotten, Lloyd joins the cast on stage, where he and Poppy announce their marriage.

As a stage play, Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* toyed ingeniously with the sense of jeopardy that always crackles through live theatre - the apprehension that something may at any moment go gloriously wrong. Even better: in requiring the split-second, knife-edge technique of farce to fall apart with split-second, knife-edge accuracy, Frayn aroused the still more delicious anticipation that the going wrong might itself go wrong. This being something that cinema, by its nature, is incapable of - we all know about retakes, after all - there's a gap at the centre of Peter Bogdanovich's film that all his intricate camera movements and slick dovetailing of action can never quite fill.

Nor has he managed to solve the original's key structural fault: that the second act, in which watching from backstage we see (or rather hear) the play-within-a-play starting to disintegrate, is far funnier than the third act, which simply gives us more of the same viewed full-frontally. But at least up to the point where diminishing returns set in, Bogdanovich - aided by a fine ensemble cast - brings all the required fizz and energy to his material. The central (and best) section of the film zips along exhilaratingly, skilfully juggling characters, costumes, dialogue and props from both on- and off-stage dramas while still keeping us abreast of who's screwing up what, where and why. And wisely, the filmmakers have resisted any temptation to open up the play with gratuitous exterior scenes.

What hasn't been resisted, unfortunately, is the film's only major deviation from Frayn's original: the smash-hit happy ending. Tacked on in the most perfunctory way, it bears no relation to anything that's gone before - since we've seen nothing to suggest why the cast should suddenly and miraculously get their act together. Nor, come to that, why a Broadway first-night audience should explode into rapture over such feeble rubbish as *Nothing On* - however impeccably performed.

Philip Kemp



Going wrong: Michael Caine

Off and Running

USA 1991

Director: Edward Bianchi

Certificate
12
Distributor
Rank
Production Company
Aaron Russo
Entertainment
Producers
Aaron Russo
William C. Carraro
Production Controller
Laura Stillman Carraro
Production Co-ordinators
Office: Mark Lafata
NY/Washington:
Adrienne Kahn
Production Managers
Lou Fusaro
NY/Washington:
Bill Carraro
Location Managers
Fabio Arber
NY/Washington:
Paul Marcus
Post-production Supervisor
Kerry Orent
Casting
Florida:
Ellen Jacoby
Extras:
Ellen Jacoby Casting
International
Assistant Directors
Ken Ornstein
Douglas S. Ornstein
Screenplay
Mitch Glazer
Director of Photography
Andrzej Bartkowiak
In colour
Camera Operator
Dustin Blauvelt
Editor
Rick Shaine
Art Department Lead
Norman E. Weber
Scenic Artists
John Balling
Stand-by: Patrice Ellison
Special Effects
J.B. Jones
Music
Mason Daring
Music Supervisors
Jeffrey Kimball
Dave Wolff
Music Editor
Patrick Mullins
Songs
"The More I See You"
by Harry Warren, Mack
Gordon, performed by
Chris Montez; "Blue
Moon" by Richard
Rodgers, Lorenz Hart,
performed by Cyndi
Lauper; "Crimson &
Clover" by Tommy James,
Pete Lucia, performed by
Tommy James & The
Shondells; "Big Spender"
by Cy Coleman, Dorothy
Fields, performed by
Cyndi Lauper, Anita
Morris; "Just Like the
Moon" by Keene Carse,
performed by Urban
Blight; "Te Dare De Mi"
by Gunda Merced, performed
by Julio "Gunda" Merced;
"The Only Fish (In My
Sea)" by Alexandra Forbes,
Cyndi Lauper, Tori,
performed by Phil
Balzano; "Tiney Winey"
by A. Cassell, performed
by Byron Lee and The
Dragonaires; "I Apologize"
by Roger Brown, David
Stephenson, performed
by Benny McNeil; "Ballad
of the Maples" by and
performed by Bill Staines;
"It's Only Love" by Leigh
Robbins, Ken Barken,
performed by Leigh
Robbins; "Unabbreviated
Love" by Cyndi Lauper,
F. Previte, S. Micale,
performed by
Cyndi Lauper
Underwater Choreographer
Louis Falco
Wardrobe Supervisor
Kristy Moore Aitken
Set Costumer
Bill Loger

Make-up Artists
Jay Cannistraci
Marie Del Russo
Supervising Sound Editor
Stan Bochner
Sound Editor
Lou Cerborno
ADR Editor
Michael Jacobi
Sound Recordist
Michael R. Tromer
Sound Re-recordist
Richard Portman
Technical Adviser
Nelson Oramas
Scuba Consultants
O.J. Holden
Greg Kinchloe
Stunt Co-ordinator
Artie Malessi
Stunts
Alexis Bahr
Tom Bahr
Chick Bernhard
Rick Blackwell
Mindy Ann Branstorn
Courtney Brown
Ricou Browning
Dennis Deveau
Alex Edlin
Kelly Erin
Debbie Evans
Joe Fitos
Phil Hoelscher
Patricia Moxo
Tony Perez
Jim Vickers
Glenn Wilder
Stand-in
Sally Ann-Marie Born

Cast
Cyndi Lauper
Cyd Morise
David Keith
Jack Cornett
Johnny Pinto
Pompey
David Thornton
Reese
Richard Belzer
Milt Zoloth
Jose Perez
Woody
Anita Morris
Florence
Hazen Gifford
John K. Sasser
Linda Hart
Gina Pompelli
Tracy Roberts
Patti
Dana Mark
April
Heather Davis
Loree
Sy Bondy
Norman
Tony Jones
Curtis Valentine
George Richards
Auctioneer
Steven Reibel
Bid Spotter
Mark Harris
Shriner
E. Duke Vincent
Vincent
Daniel L. Tasciotti
Interviewer
Sydney Sandnes
Desk Clerk
Jodi Wilson
Hostess
Gary Snow
Yuppie Father
Nancy Duerr
Yuppie Wife
Jonathan Dreyer
Yuppie Boy
Nelson Oramas
State Trooper
Joshua Spencer
Kid
Kelly Scarberry
Little Girl
Tim Hawkins
Banjo Man
Harold Bergman
Sy
Mary Alvarez
Reporter

8,136 feet
90 minutes



Something more: Cyndi Lauper

Miami. Cyd Morse, a failed actress who does a mermaid act in a hotel, receives a note from J.W. "Woody" Vilela, an ex-jockey who has fallen in love with her. She accompanies him to an auction where, in partnership with millionaire John K. Sasser, he buys Mjolnir, a champion horse. That night, Woody proposes to Cyd and then quarrels with Sasser, who has Mjolnir killed and sends Reese, a hit man, after Woody.

Reese kills Woody, but not before he has passed on a key and a clue, a heart written in blood, to Cyd. She flees from the murderer, stealing a handbag from Gina, a hooker in a bar, to finance her escape. On the road, pursued by Reese, she runs into Jack Cornett, a golf pro at a moribund leisure centre. When he disbelieves her real story, she tells him that she is being persecuted by an ex-husband who has custody of their child.

While Cyd is asleep, Jack, assuming Gina's handbag to be Cyd's, tracks down Gina's eight-year-old son, Pompey, and 'rescues' him to be reunited with his mother. Pompey, fed up with Gina's neglect, goes along with the scheme. The three flee across country, pursued by Reese, and Jack deduces that the heart was a clue designed to lead them to Curtis Valentine, a friend of Woody's. However, Reese has killed Curtis, and Cyd decides to break into Sasser's horse ranch in search of whatever is unlocked by Woody's key.

Attacked by Reese, Cyd is saved when a horse kicks the killer in the head. Cyd and Jack find a canister that is unlocked by the key, and are then confronted by Sasser. He admits that he murdered Woody because the latter protested against Sasser's scheme to kill Mjolnir in order to increase the value of the property – the horse's frozen semen – in the canister. Cyd and Jack overpower Sasser and benefit from Woody's legacy, while Gina, chas-

tened by the temporary loss of Pompey, promises to reform.

Having struck out in the expensive flop *Vibes*, a comic caper in which she was partnered effectively with Jeff Goldblum, Cyndi Lauper's second vehicle is a cheap comic caper in which she is partnered ineffectively with David Keith. Patterned loosely on *Something Wild*, this has Lauper as a mermaid mime – going against the grain of her bubblegum image, she is only heard doing MOR songs like "Blue Moon", "The More I See You" and "I've Been Workin' on the Railroad" – who sports an occasional Louise Brooks hair-style and drags a buttoned-down straight man off on a hare-brained chase. This veers between mistaken-identity comedy – the initial misunderstanding about Pompey is compounded when he confides in Jack that his mother is a hooker, leading Jack to believe the worst about Cyd – and fairly unpleasant thuggery, as Reese bloodily despatches his victims. The plot struggles north-east from Miami, gradually losing steam on the way, while Lauper gives up following the heavily signalled clues and seems to rely on the psychic powers she displayed in *Vibes* to get her to the finishing line of the story.

In the process, the film fudges not only the process whereby the sperm canister (horse semen is also the McGuffin in this season's similarly dire *Daydream Believer*) is found, but the method by which the good guys are legally able to profit from their discovery. Lauper remains quite appealing, and one or two off-the-road locations – the forlorn 50s-style futuristic leisure centre built to resemble a flying saucer – are interesting backdrops. Hard on the heels of *Missing Pieces*, this suggests that the mismatched-couple-on-the-run movie should take a long rest.

Kim Newman

Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón (Pepi, Luci, Bom...)

Spain 1980

Director: Pedro Almodóvar

Certificate

18

Distributor

Metro Pictures

Production Company

Figaro Films

Executive Producer

Félix Rotaeta

Producer

Pepón Corominas

Associate Producer

Paco Poch

Production Manager

Ester Rambal

Assistant Director

Miguel A. Pérez

Screenplay

Pedro Almodóvar

Director of Photography

Paco Femenia

In colour

Camera Operator

Tote Trenas

Editor

Pepe Salcedo

Songs

"Tu loca juventud";

"Estaba escrito"

Wardrobe

Manuela Camacho

Make-up

Juan Luis Farsace

Sound Editor

Miguel Polo

Production Assistant

Pastora Delgado

Cast

Carmen Maura

Pepi

Félix Rotaeta

Policeman

Ólvido "Alaska" Gara

Bom

Eva Siva

Luci

Diego Álvarez

Little Boy

Concha Grégori

Kiti Manver

Cecilia Roth

Julietta Serrano

Cristina S. Pascual

José Luis Aguirre

Carlos Tristanocho

Eusebio Lázaro

Fabio de Miguel

Asumpta Rodés

Blanca Sánchez

Pastora Delgado

Carlos Lapuente

Ricardo Franco

Jim Contreras

Cesepé

Angela Fila

Pedro Miralles

Pedro Almodóvar

Agustín Almodóvar

Enrique Naya

Juan Carrero

Tote Trenas

"Los Pegamoides"

7,245 feet

80 minutes

Subtitles

After being raped by a policeman who has spotted her marijuana plants from his flat in a block across the road, Pepi enlists the help of her friends in the punk rock group, Bomitoni, to exact retribution for her lost virginity. On discovering that they have mistakenly beaten up the rapist's twin brother, Juan, Pepi embarks on another revenge plot by taking knitting lessons from the policeman's drab wife, Luci. Luci's masochistic tastes soon become apparent and, when she meets Pepi's friend Bom – from Bomitoni – she finds her sadistic match.

The friendship of the three women then develops through outrageous antics at parties and concerts, wild games and coincidental meetings with their quirky network of acquaintances. When Pepi's allowance from her father is stopped to encourage her to earn her own living, she makes a snap decision to go into publicity, creating a wacky series of television ads, while also writing Luci and Bom's story. When Luci leaves her retrograde husband to move to Cuenca as Bom's 'groupie', Pepi joins them with the idea of turning their story into a film in which they will play themselves. In Luci's absence, her husband has clocked up another rape – this time their neighbour Charo – by posing as his own twin brother.

Still smarting from his wife's depar-

ture, and the backfiring of his attempt to have Pepi arrested in revenge, he tracks Luci down to a disco where the three women are spending the evening. When Bom sends Luci on an errand, her husband abducts her, winning her admiration and devotion in a violent struggle which results in Luci's hospitalisation. Pepi's friendship consoles Bom after Luci's disappearance and, after their visit to the hospital confirms that Luci is reconciled with her husband, they plan a new life together and a future for Bom as a bolero singer.

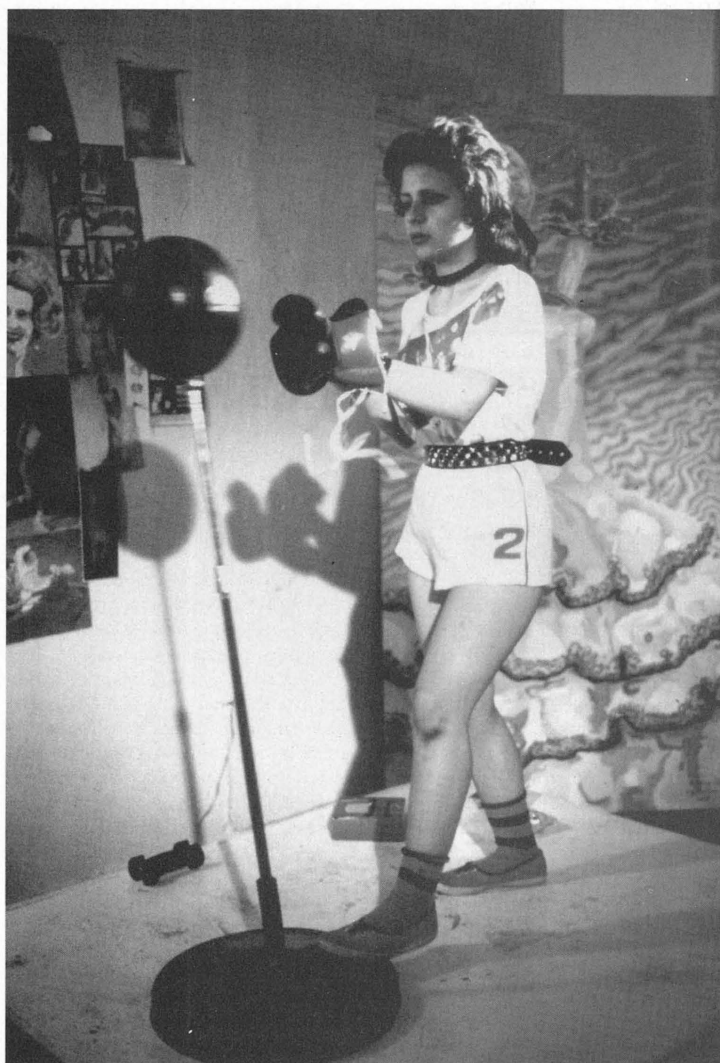
Released in Spain in 1980, at the height of the Madrid *movida* movement, the raw audacity of *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* – Almodóvar's first full-length feature – rapidly turned it into a cult movie. Coming in the wake of the mainstream commercial success and relatively mellow sophistication of *High Heels*, its general release in Britain throws Almodóvar's aesthetic development into sharp perspective.

Sharpness, unfortunately, is not one of the film's most notable visual qualities. With many of the technical imperfections one might fear from a film which began life as a Super-8 medium-length project, only to be transferred to 35mm half-way through, a major casualty is the framing which frustratingly and indiscriminately decapitates various characters, including Almodóvar himself in one of his now familiar cameo roles. Sound quality is also poor, and the stop-start production imposed by the uncertain finances of those early days makes for a rather bumpy narrative ride.

Nevertheless, despite its technical shortcomings, all the basic ingredients of the highly individual Almodóvar approach are already present: the palette of vibrant colours, indulgent celebration of the ultimate in kitsch, voracious heterogeneity, bizarre characterisations, the creation of a screen world in which eccentricity becomes the norm, and a mordant humour which is irresistible even at – or particularly at – its most polemical ►



Eccentricity becomes the norm



Menacingly large: Olvido "Alaska" Gara

◀ moments. In this post-modern scenario, pre-existing moral values are rendered irrelevant and taboos are tackled head-on, pushing the film to the edge of controversy. S&M looms menacingly large – after a sado-masochistic lesbian relationship with punk rock singer Bom, which begins with a urinal dowsing, Luci moans rapturously from her hospital bed, ecstatically reconciled with her sadistic policeman husband whose reactionary politics match his chauvinistic social and sexual bulldozing.

Luci's spouse, the only prominent – and, significantly, nameless – male figure in the film, is burlesqued into a one-dimensional stereotype, while her own euphoric subservience is a grotesque parody of self-abdication. Exaggeration to the point of absurdity is a now familiar means of delivering a critical denunciation in Almodóvar's films, and the *reductio ad absurdum* of the bedside reconciliation between Luci and her husband sets its otherwise gross misogyny outside the potentially dangerous realm of the bondage in *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*. Always more at home with his female characters, Almodóvar offers a counterpoint to this conjugal travesty through the nascent relationship between Pepi and Bom, which is characterised by a supportive camaraderie and poignancy absent from the rest of the film.

Almodóvar's typical intertextuality is flagged by the 'pasted-on' credits and intertitles, and draws on a characteristically wide range of media. Luci listens to radio phone-ins, Pepi leafs through a picture-story, glues cut-outs into a scrapbook, and later creates television commercials. Generically, this cinematic collage mixes sequences inspired by the *zarzuela* (Spanish light, often satirical, opera) with elements of the detective genre and pop videos. The now standard nostalgic *mélange* of musical styles runs the gamut from *zarzuela* operetta, tango and pasodoble to 50s rock 'n' roll and punk rock.

A string of gags and vignettes introduces a parade of bizarre peripheral characters: a transvestite 'Avon lady' peddles cocaine and Almodóvar compères a raucous 'General Erections' competition. Pepi's venture into the world of publicity generates ads for magic 'Pick-Knicks', which conceal flatulence, absorb inopportune 'accidents', and provide occasional erotic relief. She argues with nonchalant conviction the educational value of a sure-fire product for the toy market: the ultimate in 'living dolls' which sweat and menstruate. What the film lacks in technical sophistication, it compensates for with audacious anarchy and wit, only marred by occasional lapses in dramatic tension and pace.

Rikki Morgan

Sleepwalkers

USA 1992

Director: Mick Garris

Certificate

18

Distributor

Columbia TriStar

Production Companies

Columbia
An ION Pictures/Victor
& Grais production

Executive Producers

Dimitri Logothetis
Joseph Medawar

Producers

Mark Victor
Michael Grais
Nabeel Zahid

Co-producer

Richard Stenta

Production Supervisor

Greg Lazzaro

Production Co-ordinator

Lois Walker

Unit Production Manager

Richard Stenta

Location Manager

Arlene Kehela

Second Unit Directors

Richard Stenta
Rexford Metz

Casting

Wendy Kurtzman
Lisa Mionie

Assistant Directors

Randall Badger
Robert D. Nellans
Hilbert Hakim

2nd Unit:

Don Buchsbaum
David Silver

Screenplay

Stephen King

Director of Photography

Rodney Charters

Colour

Technicolor

Additional Photography

2nd Unit:
Bert Dunk

Camera Operators

Philip Lee
2nd Unit:
Dan Dayton

Special Visual Effects

Apogee Productions
Executive Producer:
John Swallow

Producer:

Daniel Chuba
Supervisor:

Jeffrey A. Okun
Camera Operators:

Dave Drzewiecki
Jerry Pooler

Lead Animator:

Harry Moreau

PDI Art Director:

Rebecca Marie

PDI Animator:

Amie Slate

Editor

O. Nicholas Brown

Production Designer

John DeCuir Jr

Art Director

Sig Tinglof

Set Design

Peter J. Kelly

Set Decorator

Bruce A. Gibeson

Special Effects

Dennis Dion

Music

Nicholas Pike

Supervising Music Editor

Stan Jones

Music Editor

Marty Wereski

Songs

"Sleepwalk" by Johnny
Farina, Santo Farina,
Ann Farina, performed
by Santo & Johnny;
"Boadicea" by Enya,
Nicky Ryan, performed
by Enya; "Do You Love
Me" by Berry Gordy,
performed by The
Contours; "It's a
Monster" by Nuno
Bettencourt, Gary
Cherone, performed by
Extreme; "The Rodeo
Song" by Gaye Delorme

Costumes

Supervisor:

Michael Hoffman

Key Costumers:

Aida Swinson

Leslie Joyce

Make-up Artists

Key:

John Blake

Rick Stratton

Special Make-up Effects

Alterior Studios

Supervisor:

Tony Gardner

Mechanical Design:

Eric Fiedler

Prosthetic Design/

Sculpture:

John Blake

Mike Smithson

Creature Suit Design/

Sculpture:

Tom Hester

Paint Design/Sculpting:

Brian Penikas

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Supervising Sound Editors

Gary Krivacek

Tom McCarthy

Sound Editors

Don S. Walden

John O. Wilde

Robert O'Brien

ADR Editor

Richard Marx

Sound Recordist

Don H. Matthews

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

B. Tennyson

Sebastian II

John J. Stephens

Joel Fein

Foley

Jackson Schwartz

Production Assistants

Joseph M. Aspromonti

Jordan J. Rudelson

Donald Petersen

John Plesnicar

Stunt Co-ordinator

Phil Adams

Stunts

Phil Adams

Jim Wilkey

Noon E. Orsatti

Jeff Ramsey

Cindy Folkerson

Michael Haynes

Patricia Peters

Perry Barndt

Dwyane McGee

Peter McKernan Jr

Spice Williams

Bud Davis

Denver Mattson

Doc Charbonneau

Tony Conforti

Jane McKernan

Andrew Gill

Animal Trainers

Terri Knapp

Sam Coulter

Additional:

Linda M. Papineau

Cast

Brian Krause
Charles Brady
Mädchen Amick
Tanya Robertson
Alice Krige
Mary Brady
Jim Haynie
Sheriff Ira
Cindy Pickett
Mrs Robertson
Ron Perlman
Captain Soames
Lyman Ward
Mr Robertson
Dan Martin
Andy Simpson
Glenn Shadix
Mr Fallows
Cynthia Garris
Laurie
Monty Bane
Horace
John Landis
Lab Technician
Joe Dante
Lab Assistant
Stephen King
Cemetery Caretaker
Clive Barker
Tobe Hooper
Forensic Technicians
Frank Novak
Deputy Sheriff
Rusty Schwimmer
Housewife
O. Nicholas Brown
Officer Wilbur

Ernie Lively

Animal Control Officer
Bojessa Christopher
Crawford
Lucy Boryer
Jeanette
Judette Warren
Carrie
Stuart Charno
Police Photographer
Karl Bakke
Diane Delano
Police
Roger Nolan
Stenta
Joey Aresco
Victor
Donald Petersen
Boy with Ear Ache
Hayden Victor
Little Girl at School Bus
Michael Reid Mackay
"Charles" Sleepwalker
Karyn Sercelj
"Mary" Sleepwalker

8,016 feet

89 minutes

Travis, Indiana. Charles Brady and his incestuous mother, Mary, are 'sleepwalkers', part-human, part-reptilian, part-feline creatures who feed off the virtue of virgin girls. Only cats can see beyond their human form, and some have gathered outside their house. Tanya Robertson is attracted to her new classmate when their teacher, Mr. Fallows, reads out Charles' sad story about outsiders. When the suspicious Fallows confronts Charles about his false school records, the latter shape-shifts into a beast and kills him.

As Charles flees in his car, he is spotted and chased by Deputy Andy Simpson, whose pet cat Clovis causes the sleepwalker to recoil and briefly transform. Charles escapes by making himself and his car invisible, and Simpson's colleagues are sceptical about



Next in line: Mädchen Amick

what he claims he saw. Mary Brady bemoans their fate as the last of a line, and demands that her son feed her soon.

On a date at the Homeland cemetery, a well-known making-out spot, Charles shape-shifts and attacks Tanya, who fights him off. Deputy Simpson and Clovis intervene: the former is killed but Clovis inflicts a serious wound on Charles before he escapes. While Mary tends her son's injury, cats continue to congregate outside. The sheriff arrives to arrest Charles, but Mary prevents this by making her son and herself invisible.

Overpowering the deputies guarding the Robertsons' house, Mary attacks and kills Tanya's mother and father, then Deputy Horace, before abducting Tanya. Back at Mary's house, still more cats have gathered, and while Mary tries to revive her sick son so he can feed off Tanya, Sheriff Ira arrives with Clovis. In the ensuing struggle, Charles dies, Ira is wounded, and Clovis leads an attack by the assembled cats on Mary, who spontaneously combusts. As Mary burns, the cats disperse, and a traumatised Tanya hugs Clovis.

This technically proficient, surprisingly gory but utterly nonsensical movie is billed as the first screenplay written by horror novelist Stephen King expressly for the screen. Unfortunately, this hardly rates as a recommendation, given King's undistinguished celluloid career to date (in which the worst title must be *Maximum Overdrive*, which he both wrote and directed). Mick Garris (director of *The Fly II*) deploys every kinetic camera movement and unusual angle at his disposal to weave some clever but redundant visual patterns around an essentially pointless plot. The extraordinary creature and transformation effects are likewise wasted on a script which fails to explain, among other things, why the creatures are called Sleepwalkers, where they came from, why they are the last of their line, and how a six-foot ravaging beast can be terrified and overpowered by a tame domestic moggie.

It is because this background mythology is neither explained nor explored that potentially subversive elements like the incest theme are never more than titillating. Worse still are some major errors of tone and judgment: when Tanya's romantic tryst with Charles in the graveyard turns into the date rape from Hell, the horror and seriousness of the sexual threat is completely undermined by Charles' jokey taunting of his victim: "Just try to think of yourself as lunch", he slobbers. The production values may be expensive but the ideas are cheap, right down to the desperate, in-joke cameos by horror auteurs Clive Barker, Tobe Hooper, Joe Dante, John Landis and King himself. Not to mention the cinema showing a film called *They Bite*, the title of Garris' next project.

Nigel Floyd

Stepkids

USA 1992

Director: Joan Micklin Silver

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Rank

Production Company

New Line Cinema

In association with

Perlman Productions/

MG Entertainment

Executive Producers

Peter Morgan

Melissa Goddard

Production Executive

Timothy Gray

Executive-in-charge

of Post-production

Joe Fineman

Producers

Laurie Perlman

Gerald T. Olson

Production Controller

Gail Rodono

Production Co-ordinator

Dan Kaplow

Unit Production Manager

Ken Golden

Location Manager

Tony Salome

Post-production

Supervisor

Ric Keeley

Costing

Linda Lowy

Extras LA:

Star Casting

Mammoth Extras:

James Vanko

Assistant Directors

David Sardi

Robert Leeven

Daniel Silverberg

Screenplay

Frank Mugavero

Story

Mark Goddard

Melissa Goddard

Director of Photography

Theo Van de Sande

Colour

CFI

Camera Operator

David Hennings

Steadicam Operators

Brian Bernstein

Bruce Alan Greene

Editors

Janice Hampton

Additional:

Erica Huggins

Production Designer

Victoria Paul

Art Director

Brad Ricker

Art Department

Co-ordinator

Wendy Smith

Set Design

Maya Shimoguchi

Set Decorator

Joyce Anne Gilstrap

Key Set Dresser

Patricia Garrity

Storyboard Artist

Eric Ramsey

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Marty Bressen

Music

Patrick Williams

Additional:

Todd Smallwood

Shopan Entesari

Music Extracts

"La Wally" by Alfredo

Catalini, performed by

Eva Marton with the

Steinberg Orchestra

Orchestrations

Edward Karam

Music Supervisor

Shopan Entesari

Music Editors

Greg Sheldon

Allan K. Rosen

Synthesizer Programmer

Charles Pollard

Songs

"I'm Free" by Mick

Jagger, Keith Richard,

performed by The

Soup Dragons; "So

Fashionable" by and

performed by The

Escape Club; "Danger

Road" by Todd

Smallwood, Tom

Whitlock, performed

by Todd Smallwood;

"Give the Kid a Break"

by Garry Frost,

performed by 1927;

"The Brady Bunch" by

Frank DeVol, Sherwood

Schwartz, performed

by Visual Vocal by Cast;

"Screwed, Blue'd 'n'

Tattooed" by J. Koster,

C. van Jaarsveld,

E. Jongsma, J. Koster,

A. Elt, performed by

Sleeze Beez; "Let's Get

to It" by Mark Holden,

Kenny Harris,

performed by Mona

Lisa Young; "So Strong"

by and performed by

Todd Smallwood

Costume Design

Jane Ruhm

Costume Supervisor

Melissa Merwin

Wardrobe Supervisors

Scott Barr Tomlinson

Jon Boyden

Make-up

Key:

Linda De Andrea

Angela Levin

Head:

Gandhi Bob Arrollo

Supervising Sound Editor

Wendy Hedin

Sound Editor

Lou Cerborino

Dialogue/ADR Editor

Hai Levinsohn

Sound Recordist

Susumu Tokunow

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordist

Mel Zelniker

Foley Artists

Nancy Linden

Brian Vancho

Production Assistants

Erin D. Field

Steven Melching

On-set:

Ann Salzer

Daniel Burns

Michelle Carson

Betsy Knecht

Debbie Nelson

Lesa Shapiro

Art Production:

Larry Cornick

Michael Goddard

Stunt Co-ordinator

Sandy Gimpel

Stunts

Tom Elliott

David Le Bell

Lynn Salvatori

Cast

Griffin Dunne

David

Dan Futterman

Josh

Patricia Kalember

Barbara

Jenny Lewis

Corinne

Ben Savage

Sam

Adrienne Shelly

Stephanie

David Strathairn

Keith

Trenton Teigen

Kurt

Margaret Whitton

Melinda

Hillary Wolf

Laura

Jessica Seely

Jessie

Jim Haynie

Sheriff

Sean Blackman

Denis Heames

Runaway Boys

Joseph d'Angerio

Mr Zordani

Cory Danziger

Leonard

Leslie Engelberg

Melissa

Bill Erickson

Salomon Marx

Paul Short

Troopers

Angelina Estrada

Rosario

Meagan Fay

Mom

Ashlon Flinders

Ethan Flinders

Harmony Murphy

Michael Murphy

Reilly Murphy

Shaggy Murphy

Kids

Marc Grapey

Employee

Googy Gress

Dad

Samir Kamoun

Driver

Buck Kartalian

Dog Owner

Keith E. MacKechnie

Patrolman

Lori June Moore

Concerned Camper

Ivory Ocean

Teacher

Joann Passantino

Runaway Girl

Joey Sciaccia

Hunk

9,383 feet

104 minutes

US Title: Big Girls Don't Cry... They Get Even

Thirteen-year-old Laura lives in a large household in an affluent quarter of LA with her mother Melinda, her stepfather Keith, her step-sister Corinne, her stepbrother Kurt, and her half-brother Sam. Laura's favoured elder stepbrother, Josh, has recently left home to work at a lakeside resort, much against Keith's wishes. This leaves Laura to contend with Sam, a precocious computer buff, and Kurt, who is into war games, while feeling that her mother lavishes more attention on her spoilt step-sister than on herself.

As the situation takes a turn for the worse, Laura rings her father, David, an artist who lives in San Francisco with Stephanie, his pregnant girlfriend who is half his age. David, however, has problems of his own. He hasn't been able to paint for some time and misses his estranged second (or perhaps third) wife Barbara and their three-year-old daughter, Jessie. One night, while Keith and Melinda are out, Josh comes by to visit his siblings. Laura tries to persuade him to let her return with him. But Josh leaves without her, and when Keith and Melinda return, they are horrified to learn that



Multiple misfortune



Over-parented: Hillary Wolf

Josh has paid a visit and that some precious china has been broken.

The hapless Laura is blamed for the incident and banned from the planned family holiday to Hawaii. She decides to run away and join Josh. The following day, her frantic mother and stepfather guess where she has gone and drive to the resort. Meanwhile, David and Barbara have been contacted and also turn up. Laura takes to the road to avoid the family complications, and is briefly taken in by a large happy family who turn out to be born-again Christians. She is then caught up with a group of teenage runaways, but leaves after a fight with one of the girls. Meanwhile, back at the resort, the various parents confer with the sheriffs while David's artistic skills revive when he is called on to draw a portrait of Laura for identification purposes.

The assorted couples also use the time to settle their differences: David and Barbara realise that they do miss each other; Stephanie and Josh find that they are attracted to each other and decide to live together; and most importantly, Keith and Melinda realise how important Laura is to them. The sheriffs find Laura's jacket covered in blood (having been used to staunch a bloody nose during the fight) and, suspecting the worst, take it to the parents. Laura, however, turns up in time to allay any fears.

Divorce has once again become the big issue in Hollywood, as the Kramer Jnr's of the world come of age. The TV problem-movie-of-the-week has shifted back to the big screen, though here it seems more like an unfunny sit-com pilot. Joan Micklin Silver battles to give this soggy material the comic edge that it desperately needs. But she is defeated before the film has even begun by the charmless screenplay, which seems to have been written by numbers, with the convenient coupling of Stephanie and Josh, David and Barbara, and the return of David's artistic powers, looming with a taxing predictability.

"It's a modern fairy-tale - with lawyers", says Laura, beaming into the camera at the beginning of the film. Ferris Bueller has a lot to answer for as Laura returns occasionally to resume this confessional mode. With a forgettable soft-rock soundtrack that pumps through the film, *Stepkids* would seem to be aimed specifically at a teen market. But the style oscillates between low-grade cartoon humour and the trite sentimentality of an earnest family drama. So while one scene plays for laughs (such as the moment in which the ghastly and over-the-top double act of Melinda and Corinne, dressed in mix-and-match outfits, are teasing the tomboyish Laura), the next milks a few tears as the unhappy Josh berates his father for forgetting to put flowers on his former wife's (Josh's mother's) grave. To have one family might be misfortune enough, but to have several seems to mean multiple doses of schmalz.

Lizzie Francke

La Tarea (Homework)

Mexico 1990

Director: Jaime Humberto Hermosillo

Certificate
18
Distributor
Metro Pictures
Production Company
Clasa Films Mundiales
Executive Producer
Lourdes Rivera
Producers
Pablo Barbachano
Francisco Barbachano
Production Manager
Juan Robles
Screenplay
Jaime Humberto Hermosillo
Director of Photography
Toni Kuhn
In colour
Video
Juan Manuel Martinez
Art Director
Laura Santa Cruz
Music
Luis Arcaraz
Songs
"Bonita",
"Superstición" by Luis Arcaraz; "Momento" by Los Hermanos Martinez Gil; "Los Marcianos" by Rosendo Ruiz Jr
Wardrobe
Estela Garcia
Make-up
Raquel Chavira
Angelina Méndez
Title Design
German Montalvo
Titles
Manuel Sainz
Francisco Rodriguez
Sound Editor
Nerio Barberis
Sound Recordists
Felipe Zavala
Veronica Nieva
Jorge Romo
Production Assistants
Montserrat Mendez
Guillermo Ruvalcaba
Cast
Maria Rojo
"Virginia", Maria José Alonso
José Alonso
"Marcelo", José Xanic Zepeda
Teresita
Christopher
Carlitos
7,628 feet
85 minutes
Subtitles

Virginia anxiously sets up a concealed video camera on the floor of her apartment, checking and rechecking its position before slipping on high heels and awkwardly running to answer the door. Her visitor is Marcelo, an old flame, it transpires, whom she has not seen for four years and whom she has called out of the blue. He is divorced and lives with his son; Virginia, it appears, lives alone.

As they speak, she anxiously manoeuvres him into position in front of the camera, all the while making her sexual intentions clear. Marcelo calls his son to say he will be delayed, and then his mother. He also asks Virginia to play a tape he has brought. As they begin to embrace, Marcelo has the sensation of being watched and notices the red light which indicates the presence of Virginia's video camera.

She tries to placate him, explaining that she is only carrying out her practical for the finals of her film course; it is a requirement that the project be filmed without cuts. She explains that she needed someone reasonably well-endowed who did not switch off the light while making love. Marcelo decides to go along with Virginia's project, preening for the camera. It is Virginia's turn to become awkward as he insists on her undressing.

Eventually they make uninspired and palpably uncomfortable love in the hammock. Afterwards, she straightens the room while he leaves, insisting that he will call her. She has not been alone long before the door bursts open and 'Marcelo', who turns out to be José, still happily married to 'Virginia' (actually Maria), returns with their children. He teasingly suggests that they should take up pornographic

film-making to boost their income.

Jaime Hermosillo has said that the idea for *Homework* came from a video he made in 1989: "Economically it was a miracle, costing only the price of the video cassette. There was no sound person, no light person, no cameraman, just a fixed camera, two actors, myself and an art director". The video, which won a prize, was called *El aprendiz de pornografo* (*The Pornography Student*). In expanding his idea, Hermosillo has said he took his cue from Hawks' *His Girl Friday* and reversed the gender of film-maker and sex object, so that the student becomes female and her 'victim' - she admits she has been motivated in her choice of project by a desire for revenge - male.

Much of the interest of the film derives from Virginia's attempt to put male sexuality under scrutiny. The struggle that ensues, and its supposed resolution in the revelation that this is a game played by married partners, ensures that it evades examination. Hermosillo is no Warhol. Nor does he obey the premises of Virginia/Maria's film-school project, nor indeed the rules of *cinéma vérité*. His fixed camera is not there to watch unblinkingly as the characters reveal themselves, despite all the tantalising references to sex. Indeed, the fixed through-the-keyhole camera position points up the issue of voyeurism merely to authenticate our belief that we are indeed watching Virginia's film and that it is indeed she who is in control.

We 'know' after all that she is 'only acting' the part of the red-dressed seductress, and have watched her laboriously setting the trap. It appears to be Marcelo's actions which are under scrutiny; his ineptness is underscored by his incongruous choice of music, and he is given a deliberately non-heroic profession, being a seller of plots - "burial plots not movie plots". But following his 'shock' at discovering the camera, it is he who gradually takes control, preening tastelessly while Virginia becomes ever less sure of herself. It is her sexuality that quickly becomes a 'problem', discussed by both partners as a product of her upbringing. The fictional Marcelo may be "traumatised by marriage", but the fictional Virginia's problems are located in herself: "No one", she confesses, "can stand me".

The film's coda purports to throw new light on what has gone before. In a room hung with movie pin-ups, José and Maria discuss sexuality and the cinema, citing *Tea and Sympathy* and *From Here to Eternity*. But while a notably relaxed José can easily slough off the farcical aspects of his Marcelo role, we are given no way to measure the distance between the real Maria and the fictional Virginia. In *Doña Herlinda and Her Son*, Hermosillo relished the piquancy of the intrusion of sexuality into the social arena. Here, somewhat bereft of a social context, Hermosillo squirms jocosely away from his own bold initial premise.

Verina Glaessner

Waiting

Australia 1990

Director: Jackie McKimmie

Certificate
15
Distributor
Contemporary
Production Company
Filmside
For the Australian Broadcasting Corporation
In association with Film Four International
Executive Producer
Penny Chapman
Producer
Ross Matthews
Associate Producer
Wayne Barry
Production Controller
Howard Parker
Production Co-ordinator
Roberta O'Leary
Production Managers
Carol Chirlian
John Downie
Location Manager
Paul G. Viney
Casting
Liz Mullinar
Consultants
Extras:
Lucy Monge
Justine Carey
Assistant Directors
Tony Tilse
Karin Kreiers
Warren Parsonson
Screenplay
Jackie McKimmie
Director of Photography
Steve Mason
In colour
Additional Photography
Jamie Doolan
Camera Operators
Danny Batterham
Steve Mason
2nd Unit:
Geoff Manias
Opticals
Ken Phelan
Roger Cowland
Editor
Michael Honey
Production Designer
Murray Picknett
Art Director
Karen Land
Set Dressers
Sandra Carrington
John Claburn
Scenic Artist
Paul Brocklebank
Clare's Paintings
Marilyn Fairkye
Additional:
Chris McKimmie
Special Effects
John Neal
Brian McClure
Music/Music Performed by
Martin Arminger
Music Extracts
"Ave Maria"
(Bach/Gounod), performed by Suzanne Johnston, Barry Bowen;
"Requiem" by Gabriel Fauré, performed by Dresden State Orchestra, Radio Chorus Leipzig, Lucia Propp (soprano), Sir Colin Davis (conductor)
Music Consultant
Martin Arminger
Songs
"Que Sera Sera" by Livingston, Evans, performed by (1) Doris Day, (2) Sly Stone and the Family Stone;
"Sarah's Not Falling in Love" by N. Batton, S. Plunder, G. Milne, performed by The Plunderers; "Call Us Woman" by T. Reary,
C. McKimmie; "I'll Be Gone" by Mika Rudd, performed by Margaret Roadnight; "Danny Boy" performed by Kamahl; "It's a Long Way to the Top" by Bon Scott, Angus Young, Malcolm Young, performed by AC/DC; "Let's Get Funky" by Hound Dog Taylor, Perkins, Jones, Saimon, performed by The Beasts of Bourbon; "Who's Cheatin' Who" by Jerry Hayes, performed by Jean Stafford
Wardrobe Co-ordinator
Colleen Woulfe
Make-up
Jenni Boehm
Karen Johnson
Eve Koszta
Titles
Optical & Graphic
Sound Supervisor
Zsolt Kollanyi
Sound Editor
Dorothy Welch
Sound Recordists
Nick Wood
Peter Fenton
Ron Purvis
Steve Hope
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Stephen Murphy
Additional Sound Effects
Coral Kollanyi
Foley Artist
Peter Hall
Stunts
Zen Stunts
Bernie Ledger
Bob Hicks
Donnie Vaughn
Animal Wrangler
Rhonda Hall
Cast
Noni Hazlehurst
Clare
Deborra-Lee Furness
Diane
Frank Whitten
Michael
Helen Jones
Sandy
Denis Moore
Bill
Fiona Press
Therese
Ray Barrett
Frank
Noga Bernstein
Rosie
Peter Tu Tran
Tan
Brian Simpson
Booroomil
Matthew Fargher
Steve
Alan Glover
Policeman
Kaye Stevenson
Midwife
Murielle Rups-Donnelly
Gym Instructor
Justin King
Muscle Man
Jeanette Cronin
Social Worker
Connie Spinks
Woman Driver
Bazza
Himself
Scarlet
Chloe
8,440 feet
94 minutes

A group of friends converge on an isolated farmhouse outside Sydney to witness a birth. Clare, a struggling artist, has agreed to carry a baby as a surrogate for Sandy, who can't have children of her own, and the baby is due. The four women - Clare, Sandy, Diane and Terry (Therese) - have been friends since the early 1970s, when they were at convent school together and were members of the same hopelessly inept rock band. Their lives, however, have now gone in different directions, and tensions are simmering below the surface. The unborn baby becomes a pawn in the various schemes that the four are hatching.

Terry, for example, wants the baby to be the star of a film she has been shooting for the last nine months: the birth will be the culmination of a hard-hitting feminist documentary about medical malpractice, the chauvinism of Australian male doctors, and the glories of natural childbirth. But she needs the baby to arrive as soon as possible: she is only borrowing the camera and the owner wants it back.

Sandy and her husband Michael, an earnest, 'politically correct' academic, are going through a rocky period in their marriage. Although they have two adopted children, they hope that one of their 'own' will cement their relationship. Diane, a glamorous, brittle fashion editor, who arrives with a new boyfriend, the affluent and unctuous Bill, seems to occupy a world apart from the others. As the waiting begins to grate on everybody's nerves, secrets come into the open: Sandy discovers that Michael once had a brief affair with Diane.

Then Terry finds out that Bill is a doctor: part of the pact between the group was that no doctors, least of all male doctors, were to be present at the birth, and Bill is made to leave. Clare's flippant attitude towards being a surrogate mother changes. Michael's paternity is in doubt, and Clare decides to keep the baby, even if it means destroying Sandy's fantasies of motherhood. At last, Clare goes into labour; the midwife is miles away, and Frank, the drunken farmer from next door, delivers the baby. All their past bitterness is forgotten as the four friends rejoice in the birth.



Will she or won't she: Noni Hazlehurst

In many ways, *Waiting* is reminiscent of a well-meaning TV movie, the kind which latches on to a topical theme (in this case surrogate motherhood) and weaves an elaborate suburban drama around it. Fortunately, writer-director Jackie McKimmie, whose second feature this is, treats her material in an acidulous, ironic way, and doesn't allow the film to become mired in its own self-importance. The weakness of her method is that the film tends to pull in too many directions at once.

In a magnificent opening shot, Noni Hazlehurst swims slowly into view before emerging from the water, naked and hugely pregnant. It's an arresting image, pregnancy seen in its full majesty, comic and splendid; but to the extent that *Waiting* becomes more a celebration of Hazlehurst's (real) pregnancy than an analysis of the pros and cons of surrogacy, McKimmie risks losing sight of her ostensible subject. Hazlehurst's character, Clare, a struggling young artist, initially describes surrogacy as "babysitting for nine months". Gradually, her attitude changes: will she keep the baby or won't she? This is just about the sole dramatic question that the film poses, and the answer is obvious from that opening shot.

The *Big Chill* dimension of the picture, the reunion of old friends who have grown apart, is rather wearily handled. Still, rather than have her characters mouth platitudes throughout about the passing of the years, McKimmie astutely uses the device of the film-within-the-film. Clare's friend, Terry, is a feminist film-maker, shooting a polemical documentary about childbirth, and snippets of this work-in-progress are screened periodically, helping to break up the monotony of the set-pieces. Terry's movie is used to broach the key debates in a wry, critical fashion, attacking the Australian Medical Association and its lazy male doctors simply by showing them on a weekend round of golf, while the commentary observes how convenient it is that most mothers can be induced to give birth during normal office hours.

Terry's trenchant micro-film has more vitality than the 'main' picture, perhaps an indication of McKimmie's background in documentary. The male characters are cardboard cut-outs: there is a hippy/dippy academic, a lecherous doctor, a gormless policeman. However, the director keeps the camera on the move; uses Terry's footage to add an extra visual layer, and contrasts the dense, cluttered, interior sequences, with serene, elemental shots of the surrounding countryside, of water, forest and sky. She is helped immeasurably by Hazlehurst's performance, and whatever *Waiting's* deficiencies in terms of characterisation and dialogue, it shows McKimmie to be an accomplished film-maker with a quirky sense of humour and a strong visual sense, who can chip away at patriarchal attitudes without succumbing to self-righteousness.

Geoffrey Macnab

TV FILM

An Ungentlemanly Act

United Kingdom 1992

Director: Stuart Urban

Distributor

BBC TV

Production Company

Union Pictures
In association with BBC TV

Executive Producers

Michael Wearing
Franc Roddam

Producer

Union Pictures:
Bradley Adams
Associate Producer
Dave Edwards
Production Co-ordinator
Falklands:
Janet Robertson
Production Managers
Christopher Ballantyne
Union Pictures:
Joy Spink

Location Manager

Richard Moat

Casting

Sue Needleman

Spain:

Katrina Bayonas

Assistant Directors

David Mason
Debbi Slater

Screenplay

Stuart Urban

Director of Photography

Peter C. Hapman

In colour

Visual Effects Designer

Tony Harding

Opticals/Special Effects

Cliff Cully

Neil Cully

Graphic Designer

Michael Graham-Smith

Editor

Howard Billingham

Production Designers

Ken Starkey

Steve Hardie

Anthony Ainsworth

Rebecca M. Harvey

Music

Russell King

Costume Designer

Ken Trew

Wardrobe

Michael Powell

Sue Tossell

Make-up Designer

Lisa Westcott

Sound Editor

Joe Walker

Military Adviser

Major Mike Norman

Independent Consultant

Jill Pack

Production Assistant

Carol Gardner

Armourers

Mark Shelley

Brian Halliday

Mike Hanlon

Cast

Government House:

Ian Richardson

Governor Rex Hunt

Rosemary Leach

Mavis Hunt

Ian McNeice

Dick Baker

James Warrior

Don Bonner

Marc Warren

Tony Hunt

Elizabeth Bradley

Nanny

Kate Spiro

Connie Baker

Holly Barker

Claire Slater

Baker Girls

British Forces:

Hugh Ross

Major Garry Noot

Bob Peck

Major Mike Norman

Ian Embleton

Corporal Geordie Gill

Richard Graham

Corporal Armour

Matthew Ashford

Marine Farnworth

Richard Long

Marine Dorey

Aidan Gillen

Marine Wilcox

Garry Cooper

Colour Sergeant Muir

Phil Atkinson

Sergeant Short

Christopher Northey

Major Phil Summers

Christopher Walker

Jim Fairfield

Jonathan Cohen

Peter Pedero

Lee Alliston

Juan Martinez

Marines

Stephen Noye

Bill Curtis

Argentine Forces:

Antonio Valero

Vice Commodore

Hector Gilbert

Fulgencio Saturno

Vice Admiral

Carlos Busser

Arturo Venegas

Captain Pedro

Giachino

Ricardo Velez

Lieutenant Lugo

Vincent S. Boluda

Lieutenant Quiroga

Robert Reina

Medic Ernesto Urbina

Juan Martinez

Marine

Alan Turner

Major Patricia Dowling

Falkland Islanders:

Alex Norton

Chief of Police Ronnie

Lamb

Gary Clement

Butcher

Harry Jones

Henry Halliday

Trevor Cooper

Des King

Morag Siller

Alison King

Flip Webster

Mrs King

Mike Grady

Patrick Watts

Tom Hodgkins

Tom Olsen

Ann Reid

Mrs Mozeley

Simon Fisher-Becker

Prisoner

Adam Godley

PC Anton Livermore

Janet Robertson

Sonia

Christopher Jaffray

Simon Godwin

Youths

Fleet Street:

Paul Geoffrey

Simon Winchester

12,190 feet

(at 25 fps)

130 minutes

1 April, 1982. At Stanley, capital of the Falkland Islands, a Foreign Office telex notifies the Governor, Rex Hunt, of an imminent invasion by Argentine forces. Furious and incredulous, Hunt summons Major Garry Noot, commanding the detachment of Marines about to leave the islands, and Major Mike Norman, commanding the newly arrived incoming detachment. Their combined forces number some seventy men, plus a few naval hydrographers.

Aware that they will be hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned, Norman and Noot prepare their defences on the beaches and around Government House. Meanwhile Hunt, with the help of his aide Dick Baker, wrestles with problems of his own: how to notify the other islanders (including his own wife), whether to intern a group of Argentinians currently visiting the Falklands, and what the correct procedure is for declaring a State of Emergency.

As dusk falls, Hunt sends his wife and teenage son off to stay at Baker's house. Shortly before midnight, the Argentine forces land, and the Marines gradually retreat on Government House, which is soon under intensive siege - though the only serious casualties are two Argentine officers, one mortally wounded. Around dawn, a ceasefire is negotiated. Realising that further resistance would be futile, Hunt reluctantly surrenders to the commander of the invaders, Admiral Busser, on condition that all British troops are allowed to leave.

Watched by journalists, among them Simon Winchester of the *Sunday Times*, the Marines are disarmed and the British flag lowered. Having broadcast a farewell message to the islanders, Hunt is driven with his family to the airport. 14 June, 1982: The Falklands are retaken by British forces, among them Major Mike Norman.

"Filmed on location in the Falklands", reads a final credit title, "and at Ealing Studios". *An Ungentlemanly Act* makes explicit play with its Ealing connections, presenting the Falkland Islands as a real-life incarnation of the miniature Burgundian state from *Passport to Pimlico*, all loveable eccentrics and tin-pot ceremonial.

Within the first few minutes, we get a woman taking a sheep for a walk, the governor laying a wreath in full comic-opera gear, and the island jail's sole prisoner happily watching a horror movie with his cell door wide open.

Even after matters have turned serious, and real bullets are hitting real people, the vein of doggedly insular battiness persists. "I hope this suit gets through all right", observes the governor's aide as mortar fire crumps around him, "It's from M&S, you know". And with her house under enemy occupation, Mrs Hunt (an affectionately scatty performance from Rosemary Leach) routs an Argentine soldier riffling through her bookshelves with a cry of "Get away from that Dick Francis, you wretch!"

Stuart Urban's aim is evidently to point up the murderous stupidity of war by juxtaposing it with this toy-town society - scarcely an original approach, and one that comes dangerously close to patronising both the islanders and the audience. Now and again, though, *An Ungentlemanly Act* makes contact with the earlier, tougher Ealing tradition of films like *Next of Kin* and *Went the Day Well?* - as when a wounded Argentine officer, moaning in agony, is left to die by the Marines because none of them understands Spanish. Paradoxically, such moments of genuine tragedy come almost as a relief from the otherwise pervasive mood of over-facile irony.

The film's greatest asset, though, is a superbly judged central performance from Ian Richardson, playing Rex Hunt with just enough tongue-in-cheek to make it a facet of the character rather than a standard-issue eccentricity. Moving from poised self-mockery ("If anyone lands, the best I can do is invite them in for a short, sharp lecture and a glass of sherry") to contained fury ("Others may have deserted these people, but not me"), Richardson's governor grows into an unexpectedly moving figure. And Urban, to his credit, places the blame for the conflict quietly but firmly where it belongs: on the political incompetents on both sides. "Bastards. Bastards", mutters Hunt, as the news of the imminent invasion sinks in. "Buenos Aires, or London?" inquires his aide.

Philip Kemp



Comic opera and horror movie: Ian Richardson

VIDEO

Mark Kermode reviews this month's rental/rental premiere releases and William Green new retail/retail premiere videos



Nightmares:
Kevin Anderson,
Pamela Gidley
in 'Liebestraum'

Rental

Billy Bathgate

Touchstone D313372

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Robert Benton
Lavish, ambitious, but strangely tiresome adaptation of E.L. Doctorow's rites-of-passage gangster novel. Dutch Schultz (Dustin Hoffman) takes a young hood under his wing who then falls for his moll. (S&S January 1992)

Curly Sue

Warner PEV 12218

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director John Hughes
Largely unsuccessful, broken family formula comedy from Hughes, lacking the sparkle of his earlier work. A grifter (James Belushi) and his young travelling companion (Alisan Porter) are looked after by a hard-nosed lawyer (Kelly Lynch). (S&S February 1992)

Def by Temptation

High Fliers TP 1001

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director James Bond III
★ See review in last month's film review section.

Don't Tell Her It's Me

Columbia TriStar CVT 12121

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Malcolm Mowbray
A bald and bloated radio-therapy patient (Steve Guttenberg) is transformed by his sister (Shelley Long) into a hunk so as to get noticed by a young woman (Jami Gertz). Poor script by novelist Sarah Bird, insipid direction and embarrassing performances. (S&S June 1991)

Double Impact

Columbia TriStar CVT 13663

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Sheldon Lettich
Muscleman Jean-Claude Van Damme plays identical twins separated at birth – one growing up in L.A., the other in Tokyo – who seek to avenge their parents' murder. Strangely, both have identical Belgian accents. (S&S March 1992)

For the Boys

FoxVideo 5595

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Mark Rydell
★ Musical comedy which shifts midway to take an emotive anti-war stance. Bette Midler is terrific as a feisty songstress who entertains the troops (World War II to Vietnam) with her smarmy cohort Eddie Sparks (James Caan). Hard-hitting schmaltz with a strong script and a great soundtrack. (S&S February 1992)

Frankie & Johnny

CIC Video VHB 2575

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Garry Marshall
Flimsy, upbeat adaptation of playwright Terrence McNally's romantic comedy about a blossoming love between a battered waitress and an ex-con. Michelle Pfeiffer and Al Pacino lend an ill-fitting glamour to roles originally written for Kathy Bates and F. Murray Abraham. (S&S December 1991)

The Indian Runner

20.20 Vision NVT 13502

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Sean Penn
Moody, early 70s-style ramble from Penn, inspired by a Bruce Springsteen song. Strong performances from David Morse and Viggo Mortensen as two feuding brothers and an atypically sensitive cameo from Charles Bronson as their suicidal father. Brave but boring. (S&S January 1992)

Liebestraum

MGM/UA Warner PEV 52498

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Mike Figgis
★ Figgis' astonishing third feature is a nightmarish pleasure – a ghostly tale of haunted pasts and illicit desires revolving around the demolition of an old iron-framed building. Evocatively shot in dark hues and with the eeriest soundtrack since *The Exorcist*. (S&S January 1992)

Light Sleeper

Guild 8673

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Paul Schrader
★ A worthy successor to *Taxi Driver* (which Schrader scripted) and *American Gigolo*. Insomniac drug runner Willem Dafoe endures a violent transition from outlaw to inmate, triggered by the alluringly dangerous Susan Sarandon. A spellbinding movie. (S&S April 1992)

Little Man Tate

20.20 Vision NVT 12829

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Jodie Foster
A mother (Jodie Foster) struggles to defend her relationship with her gifted son. Foster's directorial debut is an awkward hotch-potch of comedy and drama, but shows blossoming talent. (S&S February 1992)

Problem Child 2

CIC Video VHA 1535

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Brian Levant
Mindless money-grabbing sequel to the exploitative original. The nauseating Junior moves to a yuppie enclave and makes friends with an equally awful little girl. Toilet jokes abound. (S&S March 1992)

Rock-a-Doodle

20.20 Vision NVT 12998

UK 1990

Certificate U Director Don Bluth
Animated thrills from Bluth, master of manic movement and visual wizardry. A rocking rooster (voice courtesy of Glenn Campbell) seeks fame and fortune in the big city. Incoherent fun. (S&S August 1991)

Split Second

EV EVV 1220

UK 1991

Certificate 18 Director Tony Maylam
A rubber-suited man chases Rutger Hauer through the sewers of flooded London in this sci-fi horror cheapie. Gary Scott Thompson's script boasts some nifty future shock themes (global warming, urban collapse) but Maylam's wet direction drowns the film. (S&S July 1992)

Rental premiere

And You Thought Your Parents Were Weird!

First Independent VA 20161

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Tony Cookson
Producer Just Betzer Screenplay Tony Cookson Lead Actors Marcia Strassman, Joshua Miller, Edan Gross, Sam Behrens, Alan Thicke 88 minutes
Children's sci-fi comedy about a father's ghost who inhabits a robot created by his brainy sons. An amalgam of Short Circuit-style gags.

Brother Future

Warner PEV 12507

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Alan Smithee
Producer Wayne Morris Screenplay Ann E. Eskridge Lead Actors Phil Lewis, Carl Lumbly, Vonneta McGee, Frank Converse, Moses Gunn 103 minutes
A street-wise black kid flies through a time-warp and finds himself back in the slave days of 1822. Dismal TV 'socio-comedy', disowned by director Roy Campanella II (hence Smithee credit).

Clearcut

Guild CHV 1029

Canada 1992

Certificate 18 Director Richard Bugajski
Producers Stephen J. Roth, Ian McDougall Screenplay Rob Forsyth, based on the novel *A Dream Like Mine* by M.T. Kelly Lead Actors Ron Lea, Graham Greene, Michael Hogan, Rebecca Jenkins 88 minutes
★ Initially innocuous yarn about the ravaging of Indian land by white developers which develops into a gruelling kidnap drama. A Native American (Greene in excellent form) introduces a mill owner and a city lawyer to the savage justice of the land. Surprisingly uncompromising and riveting.

Dance with Death

CIC Video VHA 1550

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Charles Phillip Moore Producer Mike Elliott Screenplay Daryl Haney Lead Actors Maxwell Caulfield, Barbara Alyn Woods, Martin Mull, Drew Snyder 86 minutes
Standard rental premiere sleaze about a serial killer who kills strippers. A glamorous journalist goes undercover as a stripper and is picked up by a hunky detective – who of course turns out to be a psycho. No surprises.

Demonic Toys

EV EVV 11255

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Peter Manoogian Producer Anne Kelley Screenplay David S. Goyer Lead Actors Tracy Scoggins, Bentley Mitchum, Michael Russo, Jeff Weston, Daniel Cerny 80 minutes
Tacky *Child's Play* rip-off. A collection of grizzly toys wreak havoc in a warehouse and munch away at a gang of disposable humans.

Dollman

EV EVV 1213

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Albert Pyun Producer Cathy Gesaldo Screenplay Chris Roghair,

based on a story by Charles Band
Lead Actors Tim Thomerson, Jackie Earle Haley, Kamala Lopez, Humberto Ortiz, Nicholas Guest 79 minutes
 ★ A hard-boiled, thirteen-inch high extraterrestrial cop chases a fiendish foe to earth. Crash-landing in the Bronx, our diminutive hero wages war on the neighbourhood thugs. Well-executed, low-budget schlock with wry dialogue, and making inventive use of surreal locations.

Eerie, Indiana: America's Scariest Home

Video/Eerie, Indiana: Foreverware

Braveworld BRV 10149/10150

USA 1992

Certificate PG Directors Joe Dante, Tim Hunter, Ken Kwapis, Bob Balaban
Executive Producers Karl Schaefer, John Cosgrove, Terry Dunn Meurer
Teleplay Gary Markowitz **Lead Actors** Omri Katz, Justin Shenkarow, Mary Margaret Humes, Francis Guinan, Julie Condra 70 minutes each tape

Six episodes from the lively American TV series, a modern-day *Twilight Zone*, blending subtle sci-fi satire with childish laughs. Cult status is guaranteed.

Fifty/Fifty

Cannon/Warner PEV 32020

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Charles Martin Smith **Producers** Maurice Singer, Raymond Wagner **Screenplay** Dennis Shryack, Michael Butler **Lead Actors** Peter Weller, Robert Hays, Charles Martin Smith 97 minutes
 Unremarkable, tongue-in-cheek odd-couple action pic. Two warring mercenaries are enlisted by the CIA to lead a group of rebels in the overthrow of a South-East Asian dictator. Drearly predictable.

In a Child's Name

High Fliers HFV 071

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Tom McLoughlin **Producers** Donald C. Klune, Christopher Canaan **Screenplay** Arthur Kopit, Bill Phillips, Christopher Canaan **Lead Actors** Valerie Bertinelli, Michael Ontkean, Timothy Carhart, Louise Fletcher 156 minutes
 True-life TV mini-series compilation. Charged with murdering his wife, Dr Kenneth Taylor goes about fighting for the custody of his infant son.

Locked Up: A Mother's Rage

Guild 8688

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Bethany Rooney **Producer** Barry Bernadi **Screenplay** Selma Thompson, Robert Freedman **Lead Actors** Cheryl Ladd, Jean Smart, Dean Norris, Ariana Richards 90 minutes
 A true-life TV drama about a wrongly imprisoned mother's struggle to maintain links with her child. Less thought provoking than *Women on the Inside* and less enjoyably exploitative than Paul Nicolas' *Chained Heat* or Jonathan Demme's *Caged Heat*.

Lonely Hearts

First Independent VA 20158

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Andrew Lane **Producers** Andrew Lane, Robert Kenner **Screenplay** Andrew Lane, R.E. Daniels **Lead Actors** Eric Roberts, Beverly D'Angelo,

Joanna Cassidy, Herta Ware 105 minutes
 Workable pot-boiler boosted by Roberts' uncanny ability to convey psychopathic intentions simply by clenching his jaw. An obsessive woman (D'Angelo) falls for a confidence trickster (Roberts) and becomes embroiled in a murderous web.

Netherworld

CIC Video VHB 2610

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director David Schmoeller **Producer** Thomas Bradford **Screenplay** Billy Chicago **Lead Actors** Michael Bendetti, Denise Gentile, Anjanette Comer, Holly Floria, Robert Burr 81 minutes
 Risibly incoherent horror fodder, complete with *Angel Heart*-style voodoo nonsense and ropery special effects. A young heir attempts to reincarnate his dead father by liaising with his lusty and mysterious mistress.

Notorious

Guild 8687

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Colin Bucksey **Producer** Sophie Ravard **Screenplay** Douglas Lloyd McIntosh, based on the screenplay by Ben Hecht **Lead Actors** John Shea, Jenny Robertson, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Marisa Berenson 90 minutes
 Another in the awful 'based on the Hitchcock classic' series. Since the originals are available on sell-through video, there is no excuse for these insipid TV copies.

Prime Target

20.20 Vision NVT 15024

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director/Producer/Screenplay David Heavener **Lead Actors** David Heavener, Tony Curtis, Robert Reed, Isaac Hayes, Andrew Robinson 95 minutes
 Low-budget rip-off of *Midnight Run*. A renegade cowboy cop is enlisted by the FBI to transport an irascible mob boss across the country. Unremarkable odd-couple vehicle enlivened by Curtis' dry wit and Heavener's amusingly naff Clint Eastwood impersonation.

Queens Logic

FoxVideo 2194

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Steve Rash **Producers** Russ Smith, Stuart Oken **Screenplay** Tony Spiridakis, story by Tony Spiridakis, Joseph W. Savino **Lead Actors** Joe Mantegna, Kevin Bacon, John Malkovich, Tom Waits, Jamie Lee Curtis 108 minutes
 ★ A gang of thirtysomethings from Queens rake over old times as a new marriage and a rocky anniversary approach. Mantegna excels as the foul-mouthed lead, while Malkovich turns in an uncharacteristically understated performance as a disillusioned homosexual. A dynamite cast, a sharp, sassy script, and unintrusive direction.



Joe Mantegna in 'Queens Logic'

The Rape of Dr. Willis

Odyssey ODY 320

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Lou Antonio **Producer** Henry Colman **Screenplay** Steve Gethers, Anne Gerard **Lead Actors** Jaclyn Smith, Holland Taylor, Robin Thomas, Dan Butler 88 minutes
 A female surgeon (Smith) fails to save the life of the man who raped her. Melodramatic nonsense which concentrates mainly on Smith's immutably concerned facial expressions.

Revenge of Billy the Kid

Medusa MO 378

UK 1991

Certificate 18 Director Jim Groom **Producer** Tim Dennison **Screenplay** Tim Dennison, Jim Groom, Richard Mathews **Lead Actors** Michael Balfour, Samantha Perkins, Jackie D. Broad, Bryan Heeley, Michael Ripper 87 minutes
 After being shagged by a drunken farmer (Balfour), a goat gives birth to a man-beast mutant. Amateurish horror spoof made on a tiny budget and with even less wit or intelligence.

Rover Dangerfield

Warner PEV 12221

USA 1991

Certificate U Directors Jim George, Bob Seeley **Executive Producer/Screenplay** Rodney Dangerfield **Songs by** Rodney Dangerfield, Billy Trager 71 minutes
 Animated TV movie featuring the voice of American comic Rodney Dangerfield. A Las Vegas hound is moved to the countryside where he "gets no respect".

The Runestone

EV EVV 1197

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Willard Carroll **Producers** Harry E. Gould Jr, Thomas L. Wilhite **Screenplay** Willard Carroll, Mark E. Rogers **Lead Actors** Peter Riegert, Joan Severance, William Hickey, Kim Ryan, Alexander Godunov 98 minutes
 Ambitious horror fantasy, full of promise but lacking in coherence. An ancient Viking stone, revered by archaeologists, is at the heart of a spate of grisly New York murders. Riegert's fine performance and Godunov's pleasing lunacy are spoiled by the weak plot.

Silhouette

20.20 Vision NVT 16258

USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Lloyd A. Simandl **Producers** Lloyd A. Simandl, John A. Curtis **Screenplay** Ted Hubert **Lead Actors** Tracy Scoggins, Marc Singer, Brion James, Marc Baur 93 minutes
 A high-class lawyer (Scoggins) infiltrates the world of up-market prostitution in an attempt to catch the murderer of one of her clients. Silly, standard 'erotic thriller' – surprisingly short on sleaze despite the 18 certificate.

Stranger in the Family

Columbia TriStar CVT 15025

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Donald Wrye **Producer** Russell Vreeland **Screenplay** Rene Balcer **Lead Actors** Teri Garr, Neil Patrick Harris, Randle Mell, Sierra Samuel 96 minutes
 True-life TV tearjerker featuring a cracking performance by Teri Garr.

A teenage boy loses his memory after a car crash, forcing him to rebuild his life from scratch. Garr anguishes with aplomb as the Mom, sensibly avoiding histrionic whining.

Time of the Beast

CIC Video VHA 1551

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director John R. Bowey **Producer** Russell D. Markowitz **Screenplay** Lynne Rose Higgins **Lead Actors** Brion James, Carolyn Ann Clark, Milton Raphael 87 minutes

Cheap horror movie, appallingly acted and with perhaps the most dreadful special effects ever seen. A genetically engineered mutation (a tall man dressed up as a teddy bear with teeth) runs amok. If it wasn't so boring you would laugh.

Time to Kill: The Moment of Truth

High Fliers HFV 9003

Italy/France 1991

Certificate 18 Director Giuliano Montaldo **Producers** Leo Pescarolo, Guido De Laurentiis **Screenplay** Furio Scarpelli **Lead Actors** Nicolas Cage, Ricky Tognazzi, Patrice Fioravanzo 103 minutes
 Psychological thriller set against war-torn backdrop. An army officer (Nicolas Cage), stationed in Africa, accidentally shoots an African woman, and battles with his conscience as he tries to cover up the truth.

Retail

All the President's Men

Warner PES 1018

USA 1976 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Alan J. Pakula
 ★ A riveting true detective story, with Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman as the two journalists who took on the White House, FBI, CIA and IRS to uncover the Watergate scandal. Winner of four Academy Awards. (MFB No. 508)

An American Tail: Fievel Goes West

CIC Video VHR 1532

USA 1991 Price £12.99

Certificate U Directors Phil Nibbelink/Simon Wells
 Continuing the animated adventures of the immigrant Mousekewitz family as they move from New York to the Wild West. James Stewart and John Cleese lend their voices to the mice-as-men hilarity. (S&S January 1992)

The Asphalt Jungle

MGM/UA PES 50483

USA 1950 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director John Huston
 Thriller set in the criminal underworld. Gangster Sterling Hayden discovers that there is precious little honour among thieves after taking part in a daring robbery. Marilyn Monroe enjoys a brief cameo. (MFB No. 200) B/W

Avalon

Columbia TriStar CVR 22453

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Barry Levinson
 Third and most ambitious of Levinson's semi-autobiographical 'Baltimore' trilogy charting the lives of a Polish immigrant family over three generations. Armin

Mueller-Stahl leads a fine cast but sentiment often smothers the humour in the script. (MFB No. 686)

Batman

Warner PES 12546

USA 1989 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director Tim Burton

★ The first Batman movie – released to coincide with the cinema opening of *Batman Returns*. The vast Gotham City sets can be enjoyed in full in this widescreen version starring Michael Keaton as the vigilante. (MFB No. 668) Widescreen version

Betrayal

SGS Home Video SGS 007

UK 1982 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director David Jones

Shifting in time and alternating between London and Venice, the story of a love triangle unfolds between a publisher (Ben Kingsley), his wife (Patricia Hodge) and their friend, a literary agent (Jeremy Irons). Charmless adaptation of a fine Harold Pinter play. (MFB No. 597)

Buddy's Song

FoxVideo 3247

UK 1990 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Claude Whatham

Embarrassing slice of rock 'n' roll wish-fulfilment featuring Chesney Hawkes as an aspiring musician, and Roger Daltrey as his teddy boy father. (MFB No. 686)

The Candidate

Warner PES 1022

USA 1972 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Michael Ritchie

A handsome blond presidential hopeful allows his minders to mould his image and ideals into what they think the public wants. Starring Robert Redford as the candidate. (MFB No. 466)

Chocolat

Electric EP 0002

France 1988 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Claire Denis

★ Finely characterised memoir of a young girl's life in the Cameroons under French rule. The film manages to be as sympathetic to the plight of the colonialists as to the oppression of the African people. (MFB No. 663) Subtitles

Come See the Paradise

FoxVideo 1854

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Alan Parker

The trials of a union organiser turned soldier (Dennis Quaid) and his Japanese-American wife (Tamlyn Tomita) in the years just before and after Pearl Harbor. Uncertain of tone. (MFB No. 683)

Cool Hand Luke

Warner PES 11037

USA 1967 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Stuart Rosenberg

★ Paul Newman enjoys one of his best roles (and an inventive script) as a rebellious Southern convict who wins respect from the other prisoners for his defiant spirit. (MFB No. 408)

Criminal Law

Columbia TriStar CVR 21636

USA 1989 Price £7.99

Certificate 18 Director Martin Campbell
From the director of *Edge of Darkness*, an urban thriller that turns into a more

conventional courtroom drama about a lawyer who defends a wealthy rapist-murderer. Notable for the intense performances by Kevin Bacon and Gary Oldman. (MFB No. 682)

Dream Machine

First Independent VA 30246

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Lyman Dayton

Adolescent fantasy starring teen-idol Corey Haim and involving a silver Porsche with a corpse in the trunk, a pretty girl and a lot of chasing around. (S&S October 1991, Rental Premiere)

Father, Master (Padre Padrone)

Artificial Eye ART 035

Italy 1977 Price £15.99

Certificate 18 Directors Paolo

Taviani/Vittorio Taviani

★ The Taviani brothers' magnificent adaptation of Sardinian shepherd-turned-writer Gavino Ledda's autobiography is a depiction of the age-old struggle between father and son and the possibility of liberation from oppression through literacy. (MFB No. 526) Subtitles

The Field

Video Collection VC 3387

UK 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Jim Sheridan

★ Set in rural Ireland in 1939 and from the director of *My Left Foot*, a tale of greed and murder to rival King Lear. Richard Harris stars as a patriarch blindly fighting to save the field he rents from being bought by a visiting American (Tom Berenger). (MFB No. 686)

The Handmaid's Tale

MCEG Virgin VVD 1073

USA/Germany 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Volker Schlöndorff

Adapted from Margaret Atwood's novel about a future where the few fertile women left are forced to bear children to the ruling elite. Natasha Richardson is hired out to produce a child for Commander Robert Duvall and his barren wife Faye Dunaway. (MFB No. 682)

In the Heat of the Night

MGM/UA PES 99239

USA 1967 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Norman Jewison

Wordy and intense Oscar-winning thriller set in race-divided Mississippi. A redneck sheriff (Rod Steiger) and an out-of-town detective (Sidney Poitier) are reluctantly harnessed together on a murder case. (MFB No. 405)

It

Warner PES 12198

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Tommy Lee Wallace

A shape-changing monster is released through people's imaginations and then devours them. Based on Stephen King's novel, it merges several horror themes familiar from the *Alien* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies. (S&S October 1991, Rental Premiere)

Journey of Hope (Reise der Hoffnung)

Video Collection VC 3397

Switzerland 1990 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Director Xavier Koller

Koller's bleak subject – the futile and ultimately tragic efforts of a Turkish family to sneak over the borders of Europe – is timely, but unfortunately

the sensitive issues raised about economic refugees are barely discussed. (S&S July 1991) Subtitles

Julia Has Two Lovers

Video Collection VC 3390

USA 1990 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director Bashar Shbib

A promising debut movie, made on a shoestring budget by a young Canadian film-maker, but lacking the style of sex, lies and videotape. A writer vacillates between her boring live-in lover and a passionate mystery phone caller. (S&S October 1991)

Life Is a Long Quiet River

(La Vie est un long fleuve tranquille)

Electric EP 0001

France 1988 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Etienne Chatiliez

★ Black comedy about the social consequences of upsetting the French class system. Two families (one bourgeois, one working-class) are brought together with hilarious results. (MFB No. 671) Subtitles

Madhouse

Columbia TriStar CVR 22851

USA 1990 Price £7.99

Certificate 15 Director Tom Ropelewski

The dream home of a happy couple (John Larroquette, Kirstie Alley) is progressively destroyed by a motley crew of unwelcome house guests. An unsubtle and seldom funny comedy. (MFB No. 682)

Mapantsula

Connoisseur CR 079

South Africa 1988 £14.99

Certificate 15 Director Oliver Schmitz

★ Filmed in Soweto with a mainly black cast and crew, Schmitz's slice-of-life film focuses on a petty criminal who gets caught up in the political situation of the township. A brutal and raw look at life under the apartheid system. (MFB No. 660) Subtitles

Meet the Applegates

Columbia TriStar CVR 21966

USA 1990 Price £7.99

Certificate 15 Director Michael Lehmann

★ The 'normal' American Applegate family turn out to be cockroach-like insects from a Brazilian rainforest, masquerading as humans in an attempt to stop the destruction of their home. Off-the-wall oddity from the director of *Heathers*. (MFB No. 685)

Melancholia

Artificial Eye ART 034

UK 1989 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Andi Engel

A moody thriller which is overly respectful of its title. Jeroen Krabbé stars as an art critic who is drawn into a political plot to assassinate a Chilean doctor, infamous as a former torturer in Chile. (MFB No. 669)

The Misfits

MGM/UA PES 99297

USA 1961 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director John Huston

★ Writer Arthur Miller's lament for the passing of the old West. Two drifters, cowboy Clark Gable and mechanic Montgomery Clift, pick up lonely showgirl Marilyn Monroe on their travels. (MFB No. 330) B/W

Money (L'Argent)

Artificial Eye ART 036

Switzerland/France 1983 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Robert Bresson

★ A forged banknote leads a young man to shame, prison and eventual mass murder. Made when Bresson was eighty, with non-professional actors, this is a film of incredible conviction and clarity. (MFB No. 594) Subtitles

My Blue Heaven

Warner PES 12003

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Herbert Ross

Reliably humorous vehicle for Steve Martin, scripted by Nora Ephron, about a city-slick gangster who finds himself stuck in deepest suburbia under a Witness Protection Program. (MFB No. 682)

The Nasty Girl (Das schreckliche Mädchen)

Video Collection VC 3391

Germany 1989 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Director Michael Verhoeven

★ A satirical foray into the territory of *Heimat* (although considerably shorter) in which a young woman sets about uncovering the Nazi past of her Bavarian home town, upsetting the locals in the process. (MFB No. 684) Subtitles

Pascal's Island

MCEG Virgin VVD 1074

UK 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director James Dearden

Peculiar spy drama set on an idyllic Greek island, and often seeming like an Agatha Christie mystery disguised as an art film. With Ben Kingsley, Charles Dance and Helen Mirren. (MFB No. 660)

Postcards from the Edge

Columbia TriStar CVR 22457

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Mike Nichols

★ Scripted by Carrie Fisher about her own difficult relationship with her mother Debbie Reynolds. Meryl Streep as the Hollywood actress daughter and Shirley MaLaîne as the domineering actress mother perform their sparring scenes with satisfying theatricality. (MFB No. 685)

Prayer of the Rollerboys

First Independent VA 30248

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Rick King

In an apocalyptic future, Corey Haim stands up to a gang of fascist speed skaters led by a cool Christopher Collet. Teen-movie weighed down by heavy-handed anti-drug and anti-racist messages. (S&S August 1992)

The Prince and the Showgirl

Warner PES 11154

USA 1957 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Laurence Olivier

Leaden period whimsy about an American showgirl (Marilyn Monroe) who falls in love with a European prince (Laurence Olivier) while in London. (MFB No. 282)

Rebel

First Independent VA 30261

Australia 1985 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Michael Jenkins

Ashore in Sydney, a wartime GI (Matt Dillon) decides that he doesn't want

to fight the Japanese. Unmemorable love story. (MFB No. 632)

The Reflecting Skin

MCEG Virgin VVD 1016

UK 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Philip Ridley
A hypnotic first feature by Ridley (who wrote *The Krays*), about violence and terror on a farm in Idaho, seen through the eyes (and dreams) of an eight-year-old boy. Deservedly loaded with prizes, its sophisticated and ambitious mix of art-house and Gothic elements ought to make it a cult classic. (MFB No. 682)

Return of the Living Dead

Tartan TVT 001

USA 1986 Price £12.99

Certificate 18 Director Dan O'Bannon
★ O'Bannon's spoof of George Romero's legendary *Night of the Living Dead* blends giggles and gore as the sinister dead-awakening gas once again wafts free in Louisville, infecting a gang of punks. Widescreen version (MFB No. 623)

A Return to Salem's Lot

Warner PES 11739

USA 1987 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Larry Cohen
★ A Stephen King tale that benefits from the talents of off-beat director Cohen. Salem's lot turns out to be a retirement community for vampires. (MFB No. 668)

The Russia House

Warner MGM/UA PES 54238

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Fred Schepisi
A stolid, late-in-the-day spy story set in Moscow. Despite the charms of Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer, it seems to prove that John Le Carré's plots need the leisurely pace of a TV series. (MFB No. 686)

Strapless

MCEG Virgin VVD 1073

UK 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director David Hare
The story of two American sisters in London. Blair Brown plays the elder sister in love with an unreliable charmer, Bridget Fonda the flighty sister who becomes pregnant. (MFB No. 675)

Sweetie

Electric EP 0003

Australia 1989 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Jane Campion
★ Much-discussed first feature by a director of great promise, which follows the wayward lives of a resolutely peculiar family, with Genevieve Lemon as the most eccentric member – a former child star. (MFB No. 676)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II:

The Secret of the Ooze

FoxVideo 1921

USA 1991 Price £7.99

Certificate PG Director Michael Pressman
Continuing the martial arts antics of the four turtles. There is little to interest in this sanitised sequel. (S&S August 1991)

The Unbelievable Truth

Electric EP 0004

USA 1989 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Hal Hartley
★ Handsomely lit, low-budget first feature by the talented Hartley. Bookish Adrienne Shelly becomes intrigued by a

taciturn ex-convict (Robert Burke) who returns to his Long Island hometown. (MFB No. 685)

Uptown Saturday Night

Warner PES 11101

USA 1974 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Sidney Poitier
Poitier directs and stars in this lame story about a boys' night out on the town gambling which goes terribly wrong. Also stars Bill Cosby and Harry Belafonte. (MFB No. 496)

Utopia (aka Atoll K/Robinson Crusoe Island)

Storm Video SVC 0003

France/Italy 1950 Price £10.99

Certificate U

Directors Leo Joannon/John Berry
The last movie made by the comic duo Laurel and Hardy – with the pair inheriting a South Pacific island. One for the archivists. (MFB No. 218) B/W

When the Whales Came

FoxVideo 1770

UK 1989 Price £12.99

Certificate U Director Clive Rees
Carefully researched children's story about an island off the Scillies which lies under a curse after the killing of a school of whales. With Helen Mirren and Paul Scofield. (MFB No. 669)

White Hunter Black Heart

Warner PES 11916

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Clint Eastwood
★ A charismatic film director travels to Africa and neglects his work due to an obsession for big game hunting. Drawing on events surrounding the making of *The African Queen*, Clint Eastwood manages a remarkable impersonation of the late John Huston. (MFB No. 681)

Retail collections

James Bond Collection:

Diamonds Are Forever

UK 1971 **Certificate PG**

Director Guy Hamilton

Price £12.99 Widescreen version

Dr. No

UK 1962 **Certificate PG**

Director Terence Young

Price £9.99

From Russia with Love

UK 1963 **Certificate PG**

Director Terence Young

Price £9.99

Goldfinger

UK 1964 **Certificate PG**

Director Guy Hamilton

Price £9.99

Thunderball

UK 1965 **Certificate PG**

Director Terence Young

Price £12.99 Widescreen version

You Only Live Twice

UK 1967 **Certificate PG**

Director Lewis Gilbert

Price £12.99 Widescreen version

MGM/UA PES 99206/99210/99209/99205/99208/99207

★ The best of the James Bond series, with suave Sean Connery co-starring



Bond... James Bond: Sean Connery

with a bevy of Bond 'girls' (from Ursula Andress to Jill St. John) and dastardly villains (Joseph Wiseman to Donald Pleasence). Pick the earlier films for wit and plot, the later ones for set design and elaborate stunts. (MFB Nos. 457/345/358/370/385/403)

Frank Capra Collection:

Broadway Bill (aka Strictly Confidential)

USA 1934 **Certificate U**

It's a Wonderful Life

USA 1946 **Certificate U**

Lady for a Day

USA 1933 **Certificate U**

Meet John Doe

USA 1941 **Certificate U**

Video Collection VC

3384/3388/3386/3385

Price £12.99 each

Director Frank Capra

★ A selection of Capra's best work, showing his cracking pace and effortless style, still delightful even though he is often accused of sentimentality. These examples have all been re-edited with extra footage under the supervision of Frank Capra Jr. *Broadway Bill*, with Myrna Loy, is a racehorse fantasy typical of sophisticated 30s comedy; the immortal *It's a Wonderful Life* stars James Stewart, rescued by an angel from suicide; *Lady for a Day* is a Damon Runyon farce about gangsters who set up elderly Amy Robson as a rich woman to impress her visiting daughter; *Meet John Doe* has Gary Cooper under the thumb of Barbara Stanwyck in a vicious political satire. (MFB Nos. 1/160/12/94) B/W

Goldie Hawn Collection:

Overboard

USA 1987 **Certificate PG**

Director Garry Marshall

Private Benjamin

USA 1980 **Certificate 15**

Director Howard Zieff

Protocol

USA 1984 **Certificate PG**

Director Herbert Ross

Swing Shift

USA 1984 **Certificate PG**

Director Jonathan Demme

Wildcats

(see Retail Premiere)

Warner MGM/UA PES

51197/11075/11434/11376/11583

Price £10.99 each

Marketed under the rough heading of 'comedy', these films are more an assortment than a collection. A distinguished series of writers and directors have come and gone, none of them managing to extract the full

potential from a talented actress. The best of the bunch are the two films in which Hawn plays opposite her longtime companion Kurt Russell – *Overboard* and *Swing Shift*. (MFB Nos. 653/565/617/623)

Retail premiere

Dream a Little Dream

First Independent VA 30104

USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Marc Rocco
Producers D.E. Eisenberg, Marc Rocco
Screenplay Daniel Jay Franklin, D.E. Eisenberg, Marc Rocco
Lead Actors Jason Robards, Corey Feldman, Piper Laurie, Meredith Salenger, Harry Dean Stanton, Corey Haim
110 minutes
Script-by-numbers school corridor comedy which involves the personalities of teenage Feldman and elderly Robards being swapped after a 'psychic collision'.

Fast Getaway

First Independent VA 30247

USA 1991 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Spiro Razatos
Producers Paul Hertzberg, Lisa M. Hansen
Screenplay James Dixon
Lead Actors Cynthia Rothrock, Corey Haim, Leo Rossi, Ken Lerner, Marcia Strassman
83 minutes
The misadventures of a gang of bank robbers – including a father (Rossi) and son (Haim). Rossi's jilted girlfriend is martial arts expert Cynthia Rothrock. Action-packed nonsense.

Hush-a-bye Baby

Connoisseur CR 074

Ireland 1989 Price £14.99

Certificate 15 Director Margo Harkin, for Derry Film and Video Workshop
Producer Tom Collins
Screenplay Margo Harkin, Stephanie English
Lead Actors Emer McCourt, Sinéad O'Connor, Michael Liebman, Cathy Casey, Julie Rodgers
80 minutes
★ A realistic portrayal of the lives of four fifteen-year-old schoolgirls from the Catholic area of Derry. The film doesn't flinch from such matters as teenage pregnancy and military occupation.

Lean on Me

Warner PES 11875

USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director John G. Avildsen
Producer Norman Twain
Screenplay Michael Schiffer
Lead Actors Morgan Freeman, Beverly Todd, Robert Guillaume
104 minutes

An unconventional headteacher takes over a no-hope high school, expels three hundred troublemakers, locks out drugdealers and tries to educate the students. A triumphalist version of real-life events that occurred in 1987 at a school in New Jersey.

Wildcats

Warner PES 11583

USA 1986 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Michael Ritchie
Producer Anthea Sylbert
Screenplay Ezra Sacks
Lead Actors Goldie Hawn, James Keach, Swoosie Kurtz
102 minutes
American football comedy with Goldie Hawn becoming a coach to a team of useless meatheads. The usual 'young woman takes on sexist men' gags ensue.

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Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at *Sight and Sound*, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

Projections

From John Boorman

I sympathise with *Sight and Sound*'s task of having to be all things to all men. Having gobbled up the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, it is so cramped for space that we have to turn the magazine on its side to read each film title in review. Despite the inevitable hesitations and misjudgments in its revised manifestation, it remains the vital and essential organ for film. Much of the virulent criticism levelled against it by those who lament the demise of the *MFB* and its stately predecessor is quite unjustified.

However, the onslaught has clearly unnerved its editors and I want to reassure them that *Projections*, the annual forum for film-makers that Walter Donohue and I edit, is not intended as a threat to your magazine. Our aim is only to explore some of the longer and more penetrating aspects of film-making which *Sight and Sound*, quite understandably, has had to drop. Your need to appeal to a wide general audience makes it difficult for you to include substantial material of interest to movie-makers. *Projections* is aimed solely at practitioners and written by them. I can't help feeling that your review of *Projections*, coming three tardy months late, betrayed anxieties that we might be stepping on your toes.

Projections has been welcomed by critics and film-makers with great enthusiasm, except by *Sight and Sound*. Well, we expect *Sight and Sound* to be stringent, but the tone of your review was carping and nit-picking. For instance, your reviewer complained that some of the contributions were not written by film-makers as we claimed but were merely interviews. When we do interview, the interviewer is simply there to prompt. He does not comment. The interview is transcribed and the subject then edits and re-writes without intervention from us. *Projections* will include each year a substantial study of the work of a film-maker done in this style. Next year it will be Altman on Altman.

The journal which I wrote in the first edition will be written next year by Bertrand Tavernier. Based on what he has written so far, it promises to be a fascinating account of his year. He reports his doubts and hopes for the movie he is making, he recounts anecdotes that spring lightly from his encyclopaedic knowledge of film history and he is pungent and controversial on the politics of film. In a substantial piece, Jaco van Dormael (*Toto the Hero*), has written the best account of the process of writing a screenplay that I have ever read.

As in *Projection I* there will be responses to a question that we pose to film-makers worldwide. (Kieślowski's piece in this year's *Projections* on freedom in the cinema is just wonderful.)

Let me urge your readers not to buy *Projections* if it means giving up their subscription to *Sight and Sound*, which is much more important. We sit at the margin, merely offering a snapshot of the year, once a year, and we extend a fraternal hand to you with the fervent hope that you will survive these difficult times and go on from strength to strength. Part of that new strength must be



Available nationwide: Derek Jarman's 'Edward II'. See 'Unjustly ignorant'

devoted to correcting errors of fact, of which there are several in this review, not least the photograph you caption as being of Hal Hartley. It is not. It is the leading actor in his new film, *Simple Men*.

Finally, if you are good enough to review next year's *Projections* may I suggest that you give the task to a film-maker?

Faber and Faber, London WC1

● Michael Eaton replies: I found it quite hard to recognise my remarks on *Projections* (published, incidentally, five weeks after the book's publication date) from the response Mr Boorman has made to them. It was precisely because I was slaver at the prospect of inside gen that I found several of the contributions so disappointing. Nevertheless, as I said, John Boorman's piece remains one of the most candid expositions of the vicissitudes of contemporary film-making since... well, his last book.

Please assure Mr Boorman that I do try to be a film-maker, when they let me. Matter of fact, I've a script here he might be interested in reading...

Him or me

From Jeremiah Quinn

Quite apart from the fact that I don't think Geoff Andrew (Letters, S&S July) has much talent as a critic, he has no right to write in to criticise your critics. If this compulsion to police other critics continues, he should do it in private or make it interesting.

His letter was dull because it was concerned only with minutiae, but still betrayed the zealous, misguided ego that wrote it. He – unfortunately – has his magazine in which he can express himself, and you have yours. I buy yours because I don't want to read his. Lose him or lose me.

London NW6

Unjustly ignorant

From Sandra Hebron

Whilst agreeing with the substantive point of your June editorial, it is disturbing that you feel able to assert that, outside London, cinema audiences had only "severely restricted" opportunities to see Derek Jarman's *Edward II*. In Manchester, some 2,356 people came to see the film over a period of ten days. It was screened in around thirty independent subsidised cinemas across the UK, including cinemas outside major conurbations – Grimsby, Lancaster and Totnes being examples. Many of these cinemas are themselves supported by the BFI. This makes it doubly ironic that, in an editorial

appealing for recognition of the interdependence of the various sectors of the media industries, one sector finds itself ignored. Few of us need convincing of the value of video distribution in bringing films to new audiences. But to deny the significance of subsidised cinema exhibition in making available not just the British art cinema and cinema 'classics' referred to, but an increasingly broad range of film and video material not only serves to infuriate those of us working in this sector, but also displays an alarming disregard for an important area of the Institute's own work.

Greater Manchester Arts Centre Limited

Stout sponsors

From Tim Footman

Graham Murdock, in his piece, 'Branded Images' (S&S July), fails to clarify a point which proves the total inanity of product sponsorship. Beamish Stout may be a suitable product to link with *Inspector Morse* in terms of niches and demographics, but the most superficial glance at any episode of the show will demonstrate that Morse never touches the stuff. Indeed, with his appreciation for authentic ales (i.e. cask bitter), he is most likely to be distinctly disapproving of big brewing conglomerates such as Courage and would much prefer to be sponsored by a smaller, local concern. Is Courage wasting its money? Or must we prepare ourselves for the next sinister step, in which John Thaw, following orders from paymasters, suddenly discovers a heretofore submerged taste for stout?

London SW2

Cameron's politics

From Tim Turner

Whilst I enjoyed Amy Taubin's article about *Alien³* (S&S July) and welcome any attempt to take science-fiction cinema seriously, I cannot help but disagree with her analysis of James Cameron's politics.

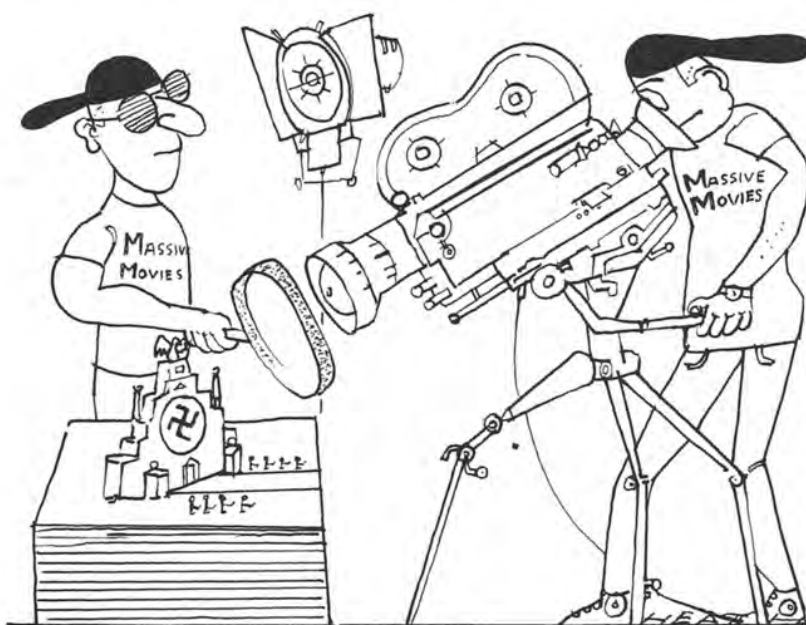
The Terminator, *Aliens* and *The Abyss* all display a decidedly anti-military standpoint. Cameron may fetishise the hardware, but he constantly undercuts the heroic position of his soldier characters. Military planning creates *The Terminator*, and an ordinary woman, not the hardened warrior, destroys it. In *T2*, a passionate embrace of militarism almost destroys the central character's soul. The military in *Aliens* are weak, stupid and cowardly, and again, it takes an ordinary human to defeat the menace. Ripley's human impulses lead her to acts of near-suicide (as in her rescue of Newt from the alien nest) and yet they are triumphant, where military strength has fallen. And remember that Cameron's neglected *The Abyss* has only military villains.

The climax of *Aliens* may well be a metaphor for the fears of white Reagan-Bush voters, but would any film-maker who embraced such politics so conscientiously debunk big business and free enterprise? Recall the destructive arms race of *The Terminator* and its sequel, the vile conspiracies of *Aliens* – both motivated by capitalist greed. Cameron seems to love hardware and destruction, but he certainly does not appear to love its masters.

And one final point: is it misogynist to have a strong, resourceful and appealing heroine in each of your first four films and never subject her to bimbo histrionics?

Wigan, Lancashire

Virtual Berlin



'The fundamental feature of Speer's designs is that they are simple geometries grotesquely amplified. Such an architecture would lend itself perfectly to computer simulation'

Benjamin Woolley

The production meeting is in progress. The property being discussed is a good property, a great property: a script based on Robert Harris' *Fatherland*, a novel about what life might have been like had the Nazis won the Second World War. The mood is upbeat. Everyone senses this is going to be a good project, a great project. The director reads out an extract from the script: "The Great Hall of the Reich is the largest building in the world. It rises to a height of more than a quarter of a kilometre, and on certain days... the top of the dome is lost from view. The dome itself is 140 metres in diameter and St Peter's in Rome will fit into it sixteen times".

The director is excited. This has the makings of a cinematic statement of unsurpassed scale and ambition. It will show the seductive but ultimately banal grandiosity of fascism. It will expose the ghastly vacuity of the Grand Architectural Scheme. Furthermore, the producer realises that the director is a man of vision. He's going to want to show the biggest building in the world in spectacular fashion. With an ego

of equivalent size, he is not about to content himself with the Small Cupboard of the Reich. What to do?

Mike Nichols, who has bought the film rights to *Fatherland*, may have worked out an ingenious, cheap scheme for recreating Harris' Berlin using archive and a few painted flats. But it is hard to imagine how any conventional production on a scale short of *Ben Hur* could hope to do the book justice. It is a film that calls for a Berlin recreated on the grandest possible scale. Nothing else would embody Hitler's politics. Speer's designs are archetypes of the totalitarian aesthetic. If a film is to be made of Harris' book, that architecture should be central to it.

For this reason, *Fatherland* provides an unusual and interesting opportunity to create what would be the world's first virtual set. The fundamental feature of Speer's designs is that they are simple geometries grotesquely amplified. Such an architecture would lend itself perfectly to computer simulation. A simple algorithm, that is all that would be needed, since that is all there is at the heart of buildings like the Great Hall. There is no organic, pluralistic complexity,

no decorative flourishes, none of the messy, fiddly characteristics of, say, a rural scene. In Speer's Berlin, the streets and buildings are absolutely straight. Everything is at right angles to everything else, all perfectly planned, all in perfect order. Nothing could be more computable.

Virtual architecture has already been used in a major feature, though it was a cartoon and the architecture in question was very different. In Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, a beautifully rich, detailed ballroom, illuminated by the light of 158 candles, all individually flickering, all appropriately reflected in the shiny marble of the hall's pillars, was generated on computer, with the hand-drawn characters inserted afterwards. It was not cheap or quick to construct. The process of 'rendering' - turning the mathematical data describing the room into an image - took upwards of two and a half hours per frame. But the result was a technical triumph.

In the case of *Fatherland*, the director will have to combine live action, rather than cartoon characters, with the simulated set. Take the scene where Xavier March, the hero, is travelling with his son in a tourist bus up the Avenue of Victory, approaching the Great Hall of the Reich. The computer's database would hold a mathematical model of the entire avenue and the buildings around it. The director would then place the computer's 'camera', the viewpoint that is to be rendered, in the same position in the computer model as the real camera is placed in a real bus in which the live action is filmed. The computer would then work out what would be seen through the bus's windows as it proceeds up the avenue, and the two images would be combined in post-production.

It wouldn't be an easy project to pull off, but it would certainly provide an exciting opportunity to try out this technology on a job that would do it justice. And it might mean that a script calling for the creation of the biggest building in the world, a triumphal arch forty-nine times bigger than the Arc de Triomphe and an avenue two and a half times longer than the Champs Elysées, would turn into a project that would be realistic in budgetary as well as in cinematic terms.

PROFESSOR POTEMKIN'S COMPETITION



The correct answers to the June quiz were: 1. 'Claire's Knee'; 2. 'The Man With Two Brains'; 3. 'Edward Scissorhands'; 4. 'Heart of Glass'; 5. 'Adam's Rib'; 6. 'Five Fingers'; 7. 'The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond'; 8. 'Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia'; 9. 'Red Beard'; 10. 'Wings of Desire'. This month's prizes (complete editions of Kieslowski's 'Dekalog') go to Jo Moriarty of South Croydon and Steve Williams of Leeds. This month's summertime competition is entitled 'On the Beach'. The first prize is a trip for two to the opening night of the

Edinburgh Film Festival. Air UK will fly the winners from London to Edinburgh on 15 August, returning the next day, after an overnight stay in a hotel. The winners will attend the festival's gala opening: a screening of the highly acclaimed Australian film 'Strictly Ballroom' by first-time director Baz Luhrmann, followed by a party afterwards. Six runners-up will receive Edinburgh Film Festival T-shirts. The Edinburgh Film Festival runs from 15-30 August, and this year the programme includes an exciting mix of British premieres, retrospectives, seminars and debates, with screenings of 'Glengarry Glen Ross' starring Al Pacino and Jack Lemmon and 'Mama' - the first independent feature film to come out of China. Answers, please, by

11 August, to Professor Potemkin, Sight and Sound, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL or fax us on (071) 436 2327. Please remember to include your daytime telephone number. This competition is open to UK residents only.

1. In which Hammer film does Raquel Welch model a fur bikini, even though she's not on holiday?
2. Whereabouts in New York does the 'Weekend at Bernie's' take place?
3. What natural phenomenon associated with Mediterranean coastal sunsets is the (supposed) subject of a recent Eric Rohmer film?
4. In which 1980 cheapo horror film does a monster lurk under the sands of a seaside town?
5. J. M. Barrie's famous castaway play,

'The Admirable Crichton' was once filmed as a Bing Crosby musical. What was its title?

6. Who, while leading a Wagnerian helicopter assault on a Vietnamese beachhead, orders a GI to strip off and go surfing? Name the character and the actor who plays him.
7. Which Adriatic resort is the setting of Fellini's 'Amarcord'?
8. In which film does Sterling Hayden play an alcoholic author who drowns in the surf in front of his Malibu house?
9. Who might you be afraid to meet walking on the beach in Bergman's 'The Seventh Seal'?
10. In which film does Karen famously commit adultery with Milton on a Hawaiian beach when the tide comes in?

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